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## IN MEMORIAM

**D'Anne A. Evans**

*March 26, 1928 — December 29, 2001*

President	1989
Director	1985 - 1988
	1989 - 1991



# George Washington: Waterman-Fisherman, 1760-1799

By  
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The year 1999 was significant from an historic viewpoint as it was the 200th anniversary of the death of George Washington, the individual most responsible for the beginnings of our country. During that year, we heard much of our first Commander-In-Chief, our first President. But, what do we really know of this man?

Adventurous youth, wilderness explorer, surveyor, farmer, married at age 27 to Martha Dandridge Custis, elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses, commissioned in the Virginia Militia, served under British General Braddock during the French and Indian War, Commander-In-Chief of the Continental Army, President of the Constitutional Convention, unanimous choice as first President of the new nation, a second term and, finally, an all too short retirement at his home, Mount Vernon. Born in 1732, he died on 14 December 1799 after sixty-seven years devoted to his country, his family and his beloved Mount Vernon.

Having considered this broad overview, we can begin a different look at this youth and man. A different look, since from our earliest history lessons we were taught to think of him as a General, as first President, founding father, and with the new emphasis at Mount Vernon, as a farmer. Here, we will consider him as a waterman and a fisherman.

A waterman is a boatman and a boatman is one who works on, deals with, or operates boats. A fisherman is one who fishes as an occupation or for sport.<sup>1</sup> Washington did all of these things.

There is nothing in early papers or records to suggest that his childhood was unusual or different from other youths of his time. He grew up working

on his father's farms, living by the water, riding horses, fishing, hunting, and studying.

However, following the death of his father and his arrival at Mount Vernon, major changes began in his life. His half-brother Lawrence, married to Anne Fairfax, lived a more social and worldly life than George had been exposed to. Lawrence had served in the Virginia Militia in 1741 in a British expedition against Spanish bases in the Caribbean under Vice Admiral Edward Vernon. George had to adapt to a new life style. He began to study more and to gain the educational skills and social graces that would follow him through life. He was in contact with and could observe the important military, political and business leaders of the day.

He came very strongly under the influence and teachings of Lawrence. We can only guess at the tales of Lawrence's service under Admiral Vernon and the sea stories he may have heard. This influence was strong enough that George expressed a desire to enter service in the British Royal Navy. For this, he needed permission from his mother (some things never change). She solicited thoughts from her friends who advised against such a choice, citing the dangers of injury, capture and imprisonment. When her decision was rendered, it was final—no compromise, no discussion and he turned to other pursuits.

His first introduction to the sea came in 1751 when he accompanied Lawrence on a trip to the island of Barbados. Lawrence was suffering from tuberculosis and had been advised that the climate in Barbados might help. This was to be George's only trip out of the colonies and his only true seagoing experience. It is believed that they boarded the sloop *Success*: 40 tons, 8-man crew, a cargo of 4,486-barrel staves, 7,627 feet of wood plank, 984 bushels of corn and 31 barrels of herring. The records of the South Potomac Naval District suggest that the departure was probably about 28 September 1751. Washington's diaries are of little value here as the first few pages for this period are either missing or so deteriorated as to be mostly unreadable.

What is very clear in the surviving record is his immediate fascination with the life and routine at sea. He took a keen interest in the sea-going terminology, navigation, weather observations and shipboard activity—including the fishing, which was done to supplement and vary the food. Celestial navigation came naturally to someone trained as a surveyor.

During the voyage, with the Captain's help, he learned the elements of navigation. His diary changed from a landsman's narrative to the style of a ship's deck log with all the details of a sea passage recorded. Indicated at two hour intervals were the ship's course, speed, wind direction, weather,

Y <sup>r</sup>	H <sup>rs</sup>	Course	Winds	Remarks for Monday 7 <sup>th</sup>			
	1 <sup>h</sup>	East	S.W	But little Wind at S.W. & S. with calm smooth			
	1 <sup>h</sup>			and fair weather			
6	1 <sup>h</sup>			See Saw many fish swimming abt. us			
8	1 <sup>h</sup>	ESE		of which a Dolphin we catch <sup>d</sup> at noon			
10	1 <sup>h</sup>			but could not intice with a baited hook two			
12	3..		South	Barracudas which played under our stern			
2	2..			For some time the Dolphin being small			
4	1 <sup>h</sup>			we had it dressed for supper			
6	1 <sup>h</sup>						
8	1 <sup>h</sup>						
10	2 <sup>h</sup>						
2	2 <sup>h</sup>	ESE	South				
Lat <sup>d</sup>	Course	Dist <sup>s</sup>	Dir. dist.	Latitude	Mag. dist.	Dir. dist.	Longitude
6. 01	E 1/2 S	22.0	00. 1/2 S	33. 41	11. 51 01	00. 1/2 S	61. 52

Time	Speed/ Knots	Course	Winds	Remarks for Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup>
	1 <sup>h</sup>	East	S2W	But little wind at SW & S with calm smooth
4	1 <sup>h</sup>			and fair weather
6	1 <sup>h</sup>			See Saw many fish swimming abt. us
8	1 <sup>h</sup>	ESE		of which a Dolphin was catch[ed] at Noon.
10	1 <sup>h</sup>			but could not intice [sic] with a baited hook two
12	3		South	Barracudas which played under our stern
2	2			[illegible] the Dolphin being small
4	1 <sup>h</sup>			we had [illegible] for supper
6	1			
8	2			
10	2			
	2	ESE	South	

Figure 1. Young George Washington's diary—a partial page containing his handwritten remarks is followed by author Leach's transcription.

sails in use, fish observed or caught. At the bottom of the daily pages, he noted technical features of navigation such as departure, distance made good, latitude and longitude. Arrival in Barbados was on 3 November 1751. During the stay in Barbados, George became ill with smallpox. On 17 November, after a change of plans by Lawrence, Washington loaded his belongings aboard the *Industry*: a brig of 50 tons, 7-man crew with a cargo of 1,230 gallons of rum. Departure was on 22 December with arrival on the York River, Virginia, on 29 January 1752.

This voyage served as a training cruise for George. He had spent about two and one-half months at sea, learned the ways of the sea, and could now be considered as an apprentice in the world of watermen.

Following the death of Lawrence, George took over operation of Mount Vernon on a lease from Lawrence's widow. He inherited the estate upon her death in 1761. From 1754 to 1760, there are no diaries by which we can follow his daily activities. However, there are references to fishing, boats and the river in his correspondence. He once indicated to a friend, when describing Mount Vernon, that it was bordered by a river (the Potomac) well stocked with various kinds of fish at all seasons of the year, and in the spring with shad, herrings, bass, carp, perch, sturgeon, etc. in great abundance. The borders of the estate were washed by more than 10 miles of tidewater. The whole shore, in fact, was one entire fishery.

His diary entries resumed in January 1760. On 3 January he wrote:

Hauled the sein and got some fish but was near being disappointed of my boat by means of an oysterman who had lain at my landing and plagued me a good deal by his disorderly behavior.<sup>2</sup>

On 6 January:

The oysterman still continuing his disorderly behavior at my landing, I was obliged in the most peremptory manner to order him and his comp[an]y away which he did not incline to obey until the next morning.<sup>3</sup>

Of interest in these entries is the fact that Washington was seining for fish from one of his boats rather than hauling the nets to shore. He was not after the herring but looking for whatever fish were in the river at that time of year. These fish would have been served fresh or smoked to offer a change from the salt fish.

Let us think about the fisheries for a moment. We know from documentation as early as 1606 that the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries were the

sources of incredible stocks of fish and seafood. Some were seasonal, others available year round. Great quantities of crabs, oysters, clams and horseshoe crabs (the early settlers actually ate them) were available. The colonists described Indian methods of catching and, more importantly, preserving these harvests. The colonists also described their amazement at having boats swamped by four to six foot sturgeon that leaped out of the water into the boats, and of fish schools so thick that they were unable to move their boats through them. Oysters as large as 14 inches were common.

As a result of this abundance, the development of fisheries as a viable source of food and income was to be expected. The early colonists knew how to fish but were not skilled in farming in their new homeland. With the excesses available from the waters they lived by, they only needed to find ways to preserve the catches and to send their harvests to other markets. In the northern colonies a flourishing industry was already in progress in off-shore cod fishing, with the salt dried cod being shipped to European markets. Living by and the use of the waters also dictated that there be a heavy dependence on all types of watercraft, so the construction and operation of boats followed in parallel with the fishing industry.

The main fishing effort in the Potomac involved the herring and shad runs of the spring season as the water began to warm and these fish returned to spawn in the upper river and in the creeks and other tributaries. In writings of the day, there are references to the surface of the water sparkling like silver as thousands of fish moved up river. Early attempts at spearing fish or trapping them in enclosures made of wooden stakes led eventually to fish weirs and the use of nets and seines imported from Europe.

In Washington's time, it was natural that he would incorporate fishing into his plantation routine and make it a part of the revenue producing activities of a working farm, following the lead of his father and half-brother Lawrence. The fisheries had a three-fold purpose: supplementing the food supplies of the family, providing variety in the diet of the slaves (referred to throughout Washington's diaries as "the people"), and providing an additional source of income when sold to merchants and neighbors.

The most significant problem in this emerging industry was the fact that these huge runs of fish occurred in a very short period of time. This combined with the labor-intensive effort required to clean, preserve and pack the fish in barrels made the five or six-week fish run a very hectic time. Huge quantities of salt were needed for preserving the herring. Sufficient barrels and storage sheds were needed for the processed fish. There was also the effort involved with disposal of the byproducts of cleaning the fish.



One of the most difficult logistic aspects of the fisheries operation involved the salt. The only acceptable salt came from Lisbon, Portugal. However, because of English law, Virginia and the colonies to the south were unable to import Lisbon salt directly. If a Virginia ship took a cargo to Lisbon, traded and bought salt, the ship had to sail to England, clear customs, pay duty on the salt then sail for the colonies. Many times the salt was required to be delivered to a northern colony for transshipment to Virginia. This added to the time for delivery and substantially increased the cost. This problem originated with the English merchants who had a large and highly lucrative dried salt cod business with the northern colonies and had strong support in the House of Commons. By controlling the importation of Lisbon salt into the colonies, they protected their northern fisheries.

Why did the kind of salt used matter? The best and only really acceptable salt was Lisbon salt. It was made by flooding large land areas with salt water, allowing the sun to evaporate the water and leaving the salt, a slow process. This provided a product that was stable and did not hydrate or draw up moisture rapidly. Thus it did not melt easily in contact with, for example, wet herring. It preserved, was easily transported and easily stored. The salt from Liverpool, England, in contrast, was made by boiling sea water and resulted in a salt not much different from that in use today, although much more crude. This salt was allowed to enter the southern colonies and was preferred for domestic use. However, it was found, by long experience in warm climates, to be too weak to accomplish preservation. The fish or meat preserved or cured with it turned rusty in color and, in six or eight months, was unfit for use. By reason of the impurities left by the evaporative boiling process, it was so corrosive that meat lost its fat content and the remaining lean hardened and was of little value. These same difficulties were evident in its use with fish.

Life at Mount Vernon involved activity on and around the water on a daily basis. During the year 1760, Washington was involved in shipping and receiving tobacco, fish, corn, oats, traveling by the numerous ferries in the area, using his own boats to travel with Martha and the children for social outings at other plantations and, very importantly, receiving goods from England.

In the spring of 1760, Washington was harvesting herring but he was also thinking ahead. He had learned that the secret to operating his vast enterprise was advance planning and record keeping. In April he wrote to his agent in London, Robert Cary & Co. advising that he shipped 15 hogsheads of tobacco for his account and ordering two seines. His letter stated:

Please send two seines by the first ship to the York River directed to the care of Mr. Joseph Valentine and charge them to Jno. Parke Custis. I apprehend it is needless to describe the size as you may see by your books what sorts have been sent every two years for some time past. They must be in use here by the first of March since the fishing season begins then and is of no long continuance in that river.<sup>4</sup>

Joseph Valentine was the manager of Martha Washington's son's holdings on the York River. It is of interest here to note that the herring run occurred on the York River in March, about six weeks earlier than on the Potomac River. Fishing had long been a spring activity for Daniel Parke Custis, Martha's first husband. An inventory of his estate on 20 October 1757 listed the following items at the New Kent Plantation:

Item	Value
a 25 hogshead flat with cable and anchor	25 pounds
1 horse boat and 1 large canoe	6 pounds 10 shillings
1 new sein	7 pounds
2 casks of old seines	4 pounds
1 schooner	50 pounds
1 small boat	1 pound 5 shillings
2 large seines and ropes	20 pounds
17 lbs. of sail twine	17 shillings

The mail brought an invoice from Robert Cary & Co. listing two new fishing seines. They were 210 feet long, 20 feet deep all through, made of the best three thread twine with small inch mesh, hung loose on the lines and well fixed with corks and lead weights.<sup>5</sup> These had been ordered the

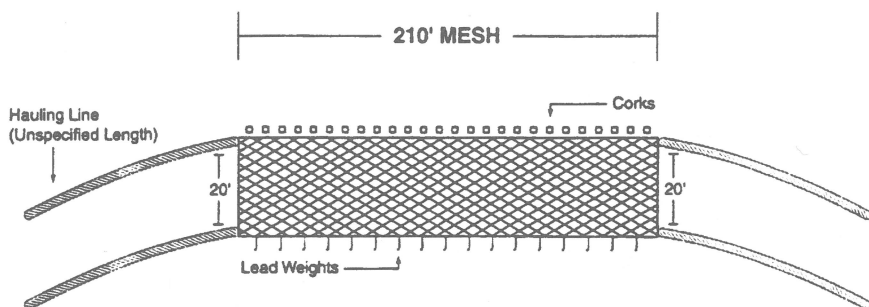


Figure 2. The 210' net of 1760. As there are no extant seines, this drawing done by Cari Dellinger (along with those in Figs. 4, 5 and 7) is our best approximation based on a technology that, other than materials, has not changed.

previous summer. The fact that they did not arrive for the 1760 fishing season, however, emphasizes another of the problems faced when ordering goods from Europe. Six to ten months from order to delivery was common. In addition, copies of the orders were usually sent on different ships due to the high incidence of loss of the ships to capture or storm. On several instances, Washington's tobacco shipments to England were captured by the French and, in one instance, recaptured by a colonial privateer. These situations were also the reason for the extensive cargo insurance system that was in use.

In February 1760, Washington began to negotiate with his neighbor, Captain John Posey, for the purchase of a narrow strip of land extending westward along the shore from Mount Vernon and including Posey's Ferry and a fishery. On 14 February a boat carrying 100 barrels of corn arrived at Washington's wharf along with a barge from Warburton (a plantation near the present site of Fort Washington, Maryland) delivering two tons of hay. In March of this year, sows purchased at another plantation were moved to Mount Vernon by water.

On 4 April he noted in his diary, "Apprehending the Herrings were come, hauled the sein but catchd only a few of them tho a good many other sorts."<sup>6</sup> On the next day, "Hauled the sein again and catchd 2 or 3 whitefish [shad], more herrings than yesterday and a great number of cats."<sup>7</sup> On the 10<sup>th</sup> there were rain showers so he employed his field hands in making a haul or two of the seines and found that the herring had come. On Friday, "About 11 oclock set the people to hauling the sein and by night catchd and dressed [illegible] barrels of herring and 60 whitefish. Observed that the flood tide was infinitely the best for these fish."<sup>8</sup>

These fish formed a part of the diet of the slaves, each individual being provided with 20 fish per month. The first priority during the fishing season was to lay away enough fish to meet this requirement. The rest of the catch was available for sale or trade. During the off-season, Washington attempted to secure firm orders for what he hoped to be the balance of the catch.

Washington was as observant in his fishing as he was in his farming operations. At this time of year, the spring, showing the importance he placed on the fishing, he began daily and sometimes twice daily horseback rides to the fishery sites. On one occasion, after a day of heavy catch, he noted that, for this new day, the fishing was poor, probably owing to the wind setting off shore which was in some measure confirmed by the previous days heavy catch when the wind set on shore. On Sunday, he noted:

My Negroes asked the lent of the sein today but they caught little or no fish. Note that the wind blew on shore today.<sup>9</sup>

He was obviously beginning to analyze the effect of the wind to see if his assumptions were correct. During the early part of April, his boat made several trips to Alexandria bringing in oats and corn. There is no description of what type of boat this might have been, but since on one of these trips it was manned by only two of his people and easily made the round trip of about 20 miles in one day, the assumption must be that it was some type of sailing craft with a capacity of 20 to 50 bushels.

During this spring, there was an example of Washington's humor. On 17 April he wrote:

Richard Stevens brought down 9 hogsheads of Tobacco to go to the inspection at Hunting Creek Warehouse on a flat which I borrowed (or as I rather suppose, hired) from Messrs. Carlyle and Dalton.<sup>10</sup>

Nothing was free. On 19 April, he departed for Williamsburg and the route he followed for this trip is of interest. He crossed the Potomac on Posey's Ferry from what is now the Mount Vernon neighborhood of Ferry Landing to Marshall Hall in Maryland. He then cut across Charles County, past Port Tobacco, re-crossing the Potomac at Cedar Point, 13 miles below Port Tobacco, to the Chotank area in Virginia. In this way, he avoided traveling the lower Potomac on the Virginia side on a route that crossed numerous swamps, rivers and creeks that were particularly bad in the spring.

By mid-May, Washington had returned from his trip to Williamsburg and Winchester. On 19 May he went to Alexandria to see the launching of the *Hero*, a 200-ton ship built in Alexandria during 1759-1760. It was owned by Captain Issac Littledale of Whitehaven, England of the firm of Dixon and Littledale and was to be used in setting up Littledale's trading venture between England and Alexandria.

In a letter to Robert Cary & Co. on 28 September 1760 Washington ordered one 40 fathom (240 feet) seine, well rigged, not to be above 8 feet deep, to have spare twine and 150 fathom (900 feet) of rope to haul by, 50 fathoms of leading strings to be of a size smaller than bed cords and 50 fathoms of garden line.<sup>11</sup> The length of the seine had increased and the hauling lines were longer, indicating his desire to reach further out into the river. Also, the depth of the seine had decreased from 20 feet to 8 feet, as he recognized the depth of the water at his fishery and his desire to net herring and shad, not catfish. Also, dragging a deeper net caused it to snag on the river bottom and resulted in considerable damage to the seine.

In December, Washington was visited by the New England man, an itinerant trader who came up the Potomac by schooner twice a year, selling his

wares at the plantations along the river. On this visit, Washington purchased 100 pounds of salt dried cod and one-half barrel of pickled cod. At different times, he also purchased mackerel, oak buckets and cranberries.

In response to the seine order of September 1760, an invoice arrived in March 1761 for one seine, 240 feet in length, 8 feet deep in the middle, tapering to 6 ½ feet at the ends, and fine meshed in the middle, at a cost of 5 pounds.<sup>12</sup>

It was during this period that Washington wrote a strong letter to his London agent complaining about the method of shipping goods consigned to him. He directed that goods be placed on a ship coming directly to Alexandria, pointing out that when his goods were transshipped, there was loss. This complaint centered around the barrels of port wine that had been shipped to the York River, then to Alexandria, and were empty upon arrival.

In the spring of 1762, the herring came in great numbers. In July, a large shipment of goods arrived, consigned to Washington and the two Custis children. In August, receipt of 280 bushels of salt was noted and separate correspondence indicated his concern with the condition of the Liverpool salt and the bags in which it was shipped. Salt, because of its corrosive nature and high weight for volume, was placed low in a ship for isolation and stability reasons. Unfortunately, this was the very worst place on the wooden sailing ships, near the bilges where it became wet and suffered further deterioration.

In the fall of the year, he ordered 500 of the best Kirby hooks, sized from small perch to large cod. Kirby & Co., in London was the manufacturer of what were considered to be the best fishhooks available. Also in this order was a request for a fishing case for the pocket, properly furnished with line, etc.

To this point, there was very little substantive information on Washington's boats. There were references to the boats going to Alexandria, boats used to deploy fishing seines, boats for the transport of his chariot and horses and family, of ferries, but nowhere was there a total number listed or an inventory of watercraft such as the inventories maintained for the farms and plantations. In August 1765, he noted the purchase of a 15 hogshead flat. This was a substantial working barge, propelled by oars and poles. As was common at the time, the size was indicated by carrying capacity. A hogshead of tobacco weighed in at 1,200 to 1,400 pounds, so this flat could carry a cargo of 8 to 10 tons.

The year 1765 saw the first signs of a totally new activity at Mount Vernon. On 15 September he noted in his diary, "To this date my carpenters had in all worked 82 days on my schooner."<sup>13</sup> This was the first indication that a schooner was being built at Mount Vernon. There were no



Figure 3. George Washington's fishing kit, when invoiced from Robert Cary & Co. on 13 April 1763, was called a fishing reel, complete, at a cost of 6 schillings. The Mount Vernon Ladies Association's (MVLA) object description is of an Oval japanned box containing the following pieces: 2 lines, 2 small floats, 7 loose hooks, 13 fastening hooks, hooks all hand wrought iron. Box dimensions 4 1/8", 2 3/4", 3/4". This copy of a photograph was provided courtesy of the MVLA.

previous entries in diaries, ledgers, journals, etc. to indicate material being ordered, no accounting for time and labor as was normal for all activities that Washington engaged in. During the next few weeks, a series of diary entries were made accounting for the time spent by the carpenters on this boat. To build this boat in the time that was recorded would have required that the lumber be pre-cut and ready for assembly. There were no records of any activity prior to the September entry.

On 19 October, "This week the carpenters worked 18 days which makes in all 190 days and 10 of John Askew."<sup>14</sup> John Askew was a joiner under contract to Mount Vernon for carpentry and to train slave carpenters. The schooner was finished and rigged by December 1765 by a Mr. Dulick Willis. Willis was paid 1 pound, 1 shilling for his work. Launching was in the spring of 1766, thus beginning the mystery of this boat. There was no record of a name, size, capacity or performance. It is assumed that this lack of information reflects Washington's primary interest in farming, with boats being only

a means of achieving those goals. The schooner simply disappeared from the spring of the year until July 1766 when it was noted as having arrived at nearby Colchester, Virginia, and a little later as having come up from the Occoquan saw mill on 17 July with 10,031 feet of plank.

The schooner reappeared in March 1767 when the farm manager advised Washington that it was loaded but weather was delaying departure. When the weather moderated, the schooner (over a three day period) delivered 1,403 bushels of wheat to Carlyle & Adams, Wheat Merchants, in Alexandria. This indicated that it had a carrying capacity of about 500 bushels of grain. However, nothing indicated if this was bulk cargo or actual bushel containers. Once again, the phantom schooner disappeared.

In January 1768, Washington displayed another sign of his creativeness when he took advantage of the river freezing over. On 21 January he conducted a survey of his waterfront from the ice, which gave him quicker and easier access. Then in March, the elusive schooner re-appeared and delivered almost 200 bushels of wheat to Alexandria. Also during March, he displayed another aspect of his ability to utilize available assets for a profit. To add extra income, the schooner was sent to Alexandria on charter for 10 days to a wheat merchant named Kirk, to whom the previous deliveries had been made. On completion of the charter, the versatility of the workforce at Mount Vernon was demonstrated. The schooner was hauled out of the water at the estate and over a two-day period the seams in the hull were caulked and payed. This was a process where oakum was driven into the seams (caulking) and then hot pitch was poured into the seams (paying) to seal out the water.

In April 1768, the Mount Vernon carpenters were busy making fish barrels in preparation for the herring run. By mid-month there was a small run of whitefish with 60 or 70 being taken at a haul along with a few herring. By 18 April, the herring had arrived in such quantities that even the carpenters were employed to haul the nets. This was a good year for the fisheries, Washington noting on 2 May that his carpenters and even the house people had finally returned to planting corn after they had ended the fishing season. Even the planting had been placed on hold.

At this point, we need to consider where the fisheries were and what the operation was like. Washington worked three primary fisheries at his Mount Vernon Plantation that had about ten miles of river, creek and tributary frontage. One fishery was at Posey's Ferry, called the Fish Landing. A second was in the vicinity of the wharf, and known as the Landing. The third was a mile or so above Sheridan Point, in the River Farm area.

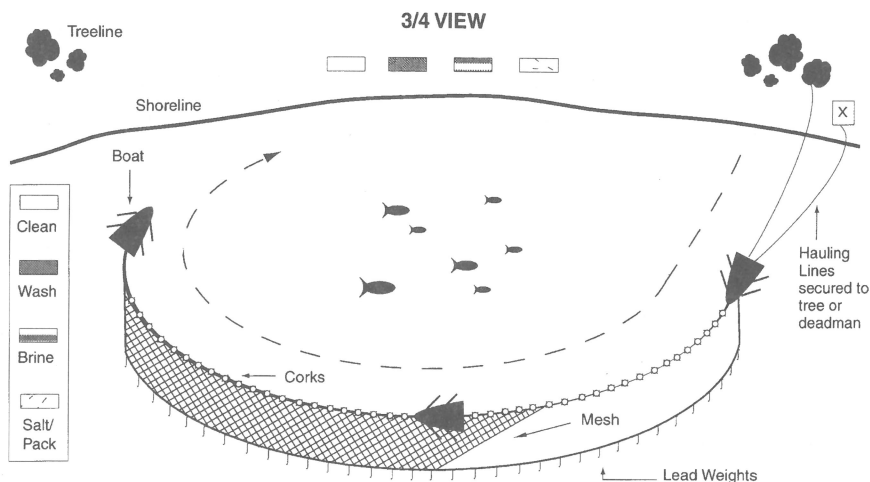


Figure 4. Typical method of deploying a seine. Drawing by Cari Dellinger.

Over the years, many other locations were tried, such as Sheridan's Point and a location about one-half mile south of Mount Vernon where the river channel is closer to the Virginia shore.

During a typical fishing operation, a boat was loaded with a seine and its corks and lead weights. At each end of the seine was a hauling line. One hauling line was made secure to a tree or deadman (wooden pilings driven into the earth) on shore. The boat, powered by two men on oars, was rowed out in a semi-circular path and the seine was let out over the stern. The lead weights took one edge to the bottom; the corks kept the other edge at the surface. The boat, after putting out the net brought the other hauling line back to shore near the fishery and the people started hauling in on the lines to bring the seine to shore. As the seine came close to shore, in shallow water, the people would go into the water to help support the top of the seine to contain the fish. The herring were removed from the net by hand into bushel baskets.

Here we begin to understand Washington's insistence on "small inch mesh" for the seines. With standard mesh, the fish swam into the seine, becoming trapped when their heads passed through and became stuck in the mesh. Removing them from this gillnetting condition was time consuming and damaged the fish and the seines. Herring form in schools, like a large ball of fish. If the seine had small inch mesh in the middle two-thirds, the herring would be trapped, not gillnetted but other larger fish could move to the outer areas of the seine and escape through the larger mesh in the wings.



These herring were the common blueback. In Washington's time they were about 15 to 18 inches in length and about  $\frac{3}{4}$  pound in weight. Once the fish were removed from the net, they were brought to tables where the fish heads were removed and the fish were drawn, the innards being removed. They were rinsed in a brine solution and then packed in barrels, about 800 to a barrel with alternating layers of fish and salt. The fish were packed head to tail, similar to what you see when you open a can of sardines, only with the backs down and the open stomachs up, rather than flat. This allowed the stomach cavity to be filled with salt. The combined weight of fish and salt tended to compress the packing and excess water was poured off as it collected on top. Then the barrels were moved to storage. Surprisingly, this method of preservation allowed the fish to remain edible for incredibly long periods of time, well in excess of a year. An archaeological investigation in 1991 of the cargo of a sailing vessel that sank in 1830 revealed some herring packed in this method had remained in edible condition.

During the last two weeks of May 1768, Washington showed another side of his interests, spending almost two weeks aboard his schooner going down the Potomac River on a recreational trip fishing for sturgeon while also visiting his holdings in King William County.

Salt was an issue once again in June 1768 when, in a letter to James Gildard, the salt merchant in Liverpool, Washington complained of 25 sacks of salt that did not contain the required 4 bushels each, and of sacks not worth the shilling each that he was charged as they were made of patched cloth. June also revealed another seine order, reflecting Washington's observations of his fishing operation. Use and familiarity with the operation resulted in his specifying that this seine be 65 fathoms (390 feet) in length, 9 feet deep in the middle, 7 at the ends with 250 fathoms (1500 feet) of white inch rope for hauling and 100 fathoms of deep sea line. As delivered, the seine had  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch mesh. By comparison, the seines had gone from 210 feet with unspecified hauling lines to 390 feet with 1500 foot hauling lines.

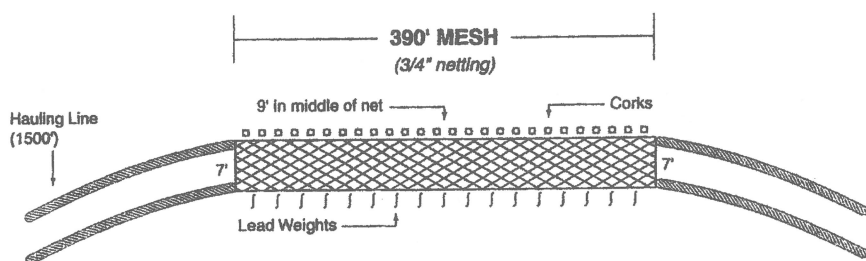


Figure 5. The 390' net of 1768. Drawing by Cari Dellinger.

The increased length of the seine would surround more fish and the longer hauling lines would allow it to be placed farther out in the river.

Recreational fishing was again evident in August 1768, at which time he embarked on his schooner, departing from Mount Vernon for Lower Cedar Point in Charles County, Maryland. He hauled his seine on the bar at Cedar Point, looking for a fish called sheepshead, considered a delicacy then but extinct locally now. He also fished Upper Machodoc Creek in King George County and Nomini Bay. On this trip, the sheepshead were elusive and on 1 September, he set out on the return trip, living on the schooner until it reached Chotank where he took a ferry to Nanjemoy and met his chariot for the ride home. With this recreational interlude over, the schooner was returned to a working status, being sent to Suffolk, Virginia for a load of shingles.

In October he attended another ship launching in Alexandria. The *Jenny* was launched followed by the usual round of parties and all night dances at which Washington was known to be a very active participant.

The spring of 1769 brought another good fishing season, with whitefish running plentifully, 300 at a haul and, a week later, herring in great abundance. It is interesting to look at the financial benefit represented by the fisheries. Washington needed about 375 pounds sterling income to “break-even” on the operation of the five farms at Mount Vernon and his holdings elsewhere. He continually strove to make the farming operations self-sustaining, able to cover his needs and those of his people. Given the state of the art in farming at that time, with limited knowledge of crop management, soil replenishment, unpredictable weather and crop disease, profit or break-even was seldom possible. Washington was a very progressive farmer, far ahead of his time with a developing understanding of crop rotation and even the elements of fertilization.

Against these difficulties, the fisheries provided a backup. Not only did they serve as a rich source of food, they represented the difference between break-even and financial disaster. In good years, the fisheries were able to contribute 200 to 250 pounds sterling as well as a commodity that could be used for barter and trade.

In June 1769, the mystery schooner came to life again, moving a load of 500 bushels of corn. A new master carpenter was hired. The goods for services arrangement was noted here when the wagoner who brought in the carpenter’s family and their belongings was paid, at his request, with two barrels of herring. Towards the end of the month, a ship from Bermuda visited at Mount Vernon for several days. Washington purchased 562 barrels of salt, either Bermuda salt or the Grand Turk salt which was beginning

to appear in the southern colonies. Both of these salts were equal to the Lisbon salt. He also bought some cotton rope and 40 yards of nautical rope. The captain of the Bermudian ship must have enjoyed the hospitality and food at Mount Vernon. He dined with Washington for ten days.

While Washington was operating his farms and fisheries and involving himself in the political issues of the day, he was also very much a part of the effort to clear and make navigable the river Potomac. This was to be a major effort on his part throughout his life, the locks at Great Falls and the canal being a part of his dream of opening a route to the headwaters of the Potomac and a way to connect into the Ohio River to open up the wilderness to settlement and trade.

In the fall of 1769, he shipped herring to the island of Antigua.

In February 1770, his diary notes:

Agreed with Mr. Robert Adams [an Alexandria merchant] for the fish catchd at the Fishing Landing I bought of Posey on the following terms to wit: He is obliged to take all I catch at that place provided the quantity does not exceed 500 barrels and will take more than this quantity if he can get cask to put them in. He is to take them as fast as they are catchd with out giving any interruption to my people, and is to have the use of the Fish House for his salt, fish and ca., taking care to have the house clear at least before the next fishing season. In consideration of which, he is to pay me ten pounds for the use of the house, give 3 shillings a thousand herrings (Virginia Money) and 8 shillings 4 pence a hundred for the whitefish.<sup>15</sup>

Between 13 April and the end of May 1770, Adams received 473,750 herring and 4,623 shad. Washington was credited with 102 pounds sterling for his fish and the rent of the fish house.

Meanwhile, beginning in March 1770 he was busy with the planning and start of construction of his gristmill on Dogue Creek. Another type of watercraft was obtained and put to work. Called a flat, this was a flat-bottomed, shoal draft scow, propelled by poles. In this case, his people were flattening bricks and the sand, stone and oyster shells to be used for lime in the mortar to the site of the mill. Looking ahead to the mill's completion, he planned to use the flats to deliver corn and wheat up Dogue Creek to the mill and to carry flour down the creek to the Potomac for loading on cargo ships that would deliver it to the markets. These ships would be owned by or under the control of merchants with the cargo headed for Europe and the Caribbean.

In April, he hired a ship carpenter for 31 days from Thomas Fleming, an Alexandria shipwright. In a very progressive move for the times, the ship's carpenter sheathed the bottom of Washington's schooner with copper to protect the hull from teredo or shipworms. This process was well known for application on larger ships, in particular naval ships but was largely unknown on small craft. It was accomplished by repairing the hull (caulking and paying as discussed previously), then covering the underwater portion of the hull with thin sheets of copper, overlapping, and sealing the edges.

As work intensified on the gristmill, two more flats were added to the fleet and a bateaux, but the bateaux was only suitable for use in calm waters. It was useful for carrying larger loads than those that could be handled by the flats, such as stones for foundations.



*Figure 6. Bateaux on the Potomac in 1991. Photograph by Donald B. Leach.*

In September, he was visited by two of his brothers and the three men spent some recreational fishing time along the shore by Sheridan's Point and in Dogue Creek. He was also visited by the captain of a ship headed for Jamaica carrying some of Washington's herring for sale. The captain's directions were to use the money to purchase, "A hogshead of rum, a barrel of good spirits, 200 pounds of coffee, 200 pounds of sugar and 100 or 200 oranges if it be had good."<sup>16</sup>

October was spent on a journey to the Ohio River Basin. Washington noted:

About halfway on the long reach [of the river] we inc[a]mp[e]d, opposite to the beginning of a large bottom on the East side of the river. At this place, we threw out some lines at night and found a catfish of the size of our largest river cats hooked to it in the morning, tho it was of the smallest kind found here.<sup>17</sup>

When traveling, such as this trip, he always carried fishing equipment, fish line and hooks, and these were kept, for protection of the equipment and the user, coiled inside a canteen.

April 1771 saw the beginning of another fishing season, with Washington taking his daily rides to the fishing landing at the ferry, watching for the arrival of the herring. On 25 April, he noted, "The herring began to run in large schools but were checked again by the cool weather."<sup>18</sup> Fishing soon improved and by the end of May, he had delivered 679,200 herring and 7,760 shad to Robert Adams. He was credited with 134 pounds sterling for the fish and 12 pounds for the rent of the fish house. This year, fish were again shipped to Jamaica. In addition, the farm manager reported that he had sold 250,000 herring at home. Add to this the requirement for about 75,000 set aside for the people gives a figure for the catch in this year as about 1,000,000 herring.

June 1771 turned out to be a good month for another of Washington's ventures. His gristmill was now in operation and in May he sold 13,500 pounds of flour, and in June he delivered 128,000 pounds to Alexandria. On 8 July, the ship *Nancy* sailed for Lisbon with 2,269 barrels of his flour.

The time had come for thinking ahead and placing orders for delivery in the next year. In July, he ordered another seine, with the trend seen earlier of increasing the size continuing. This seine was to be 450 feet in length (versus the 210 feet of the first seine and 390 feet for the previous order),

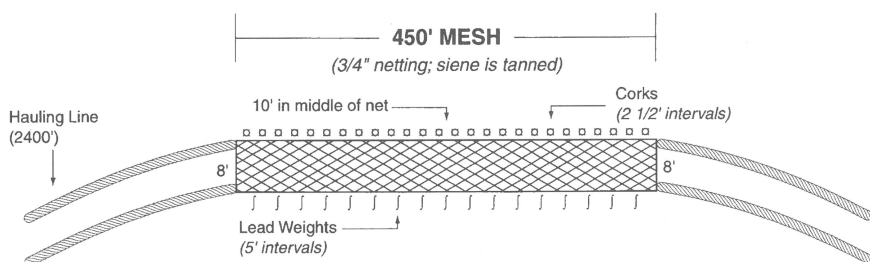


Figure 7. The 450' net of 1771. Drawing by Cari Dellinger.

10 feet deep in the middle, 8 feet at the ends, the corks  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet apart, the lead weights 5 feet apart and a new requirement, the seine was to be tanned (tarred). This was a process by which the net was dipped in a liquid coal or wood tar, which acted as a preservative. This net was fitted with 2,400 foot hauling lines. Given that the river was approximately  $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles wide at the fishery, the new seine would reach almost halfway across.

The year 1772 was another great one for the herring fishery. On 6 May, Washington was visited by the agents of Robert Adam & Company. The negotiations resulted in the sale of 929,700 herring and 10,894 shad for a value of 184 pounds sterling. Add to this the set-aside for the people and local sales and the total for this year was about 1,300,000 herring.

We begin to sense the enormity of the fishing business when we think of these totals. We must realize that this was the take from just Washington's fisheries. George Mason, at his Gunston Hall Plantation, had seven fisheries; William Fairfax at Belvoir had several also. And so it was for the entire Potomac River. Anyone with waterfront property had riparian rights and could operate fisheries from their land. Others rented fisheries for a fee or a share of the catch.

In March 1772, Washington added to his fleet of boats by purchase of a whaleboat, obtained for him by the Governor of Maryland for 20 pounds sterling. This was a type of double-ended, light, fast rowing and sailing boat that had gained fame in the whaling ships. In June, the boat was in use to visit a fresh water spring on the shore north of Sheridan's Point and later for sounding the water depths from Ferry Landing to Sheridan's Point looking for new fishery sites.

In May, the manager of the plantation in York County advised that he had rented out the seines at the Rockahock Plantation for 90 pounds.

In July 1772, Washington entered into business dealings with a Mr. Jenifer Adams. Under the arrangement, Adams would act as a supercargo aboard the brig *Fairfax* that would carry flour belonging to Washington to the West Indies. Adams would decide where and for how much the cargo would be sold for a share of the profit. Thus began events that would lead to major problems for Washington.

In September, the London Agent, Robert Cary & Co. invoiced Washington for 12 square loom ash oars, 18 feet in length at a cost of 17 shillings a pair with 2 shillings extra a pair being charged for painting them. Judging by the size, these oars were undoubtedly for the whaleboat. Meanwhile, at Mount Vernon, Washington hired Joshua Key, a boat builder. During the next two years Key repaired the fishing boats and the ferryboat acquired when Washington purchased Posey's Ferry. The boat builder also built a

boat with a 29-foot keel. As was the case with the schooner, research has failed to reveal any additional information on this boat.

In early 1773, the brig *Nancy* tied up at the Mount Vernon Wharf for several days. During this time, Washington purchased a parrot from the captain, possibly as a gift for Martha, although there is no confirmation of this. Maybe it was a well-trained seagoing specimen that spoke a language that was not acceptable in Martha's household. The bird lived a long life and was noted years later on an inventory when the Washingtons moved from Philadelphia.

With fishing time arriving, Washington contracted out the catch from one fishery, rented out another fishery to Herbert & Co. of Alexandria, and began operations at a new fishery at Sheridan's Point where several good hauls were made.

About this time, Washington learned that the supercargo, Adams, had sold the flour but instead of returning to Virginia, had used the money to buy the ship, had renamed it *Anne & Elizabeth* for his sisters, and was sailing and trading about the West Indies without offering to pay Washington. Washington promptly obtained a court order to have the brig returned to Alexandria and if Adams would not meet his demand for payment agreeably to the bottomry bond placed on the ship, it was to be sold in satisfaction. A bottomry bond is a form of maritime security by which a ship is pledged to satisfy a debt or a loan. Washington related that:

After laying a month agreeable to the terms of the bond and having been advertised for sale during that time, with no buyers, I was compelled to buy it myself, much against my inclination as I had no desire of being concerned in shipping.<sup>19</sup>

He renamed the brig *Farmer*. In May 1774 the *Farmer* departed Alexandria for the West Indies with a cargo of flour and herring.

Also in May, he went with guests, his family and company to Johnson's Ferry for a boat race. These races usually involved two long boats, a type of rowing boat of about 30 feet propelled by five or six oars. From a starting point near shore, the boats were rowed out and around a marker placed a mile or so out into the river and back to a finish line. Small wagers were made on the outcome. At this event, Washington ordered 48 bottles of claret wine from the merchant William Herbert, also an attendee. Herbert subsequently paid for the wine. Can we assume this was the wager?

In April 1775, the brig *Farmer* returned from a voyage that had delivered 4,000 bushels of corn to Lisbon and on the return trip brought 3,000 bushels

of salt to Mount Vernon from Grand Turk Island. In mid-April, true to his word of not wishing to be involved in shipping, he sold the *Farmer*. During his ownership, he had become very much aware of the costs and problems involved with a venture of this type. He had re-rigged the ship, bought new anchors and anchor cables to replace those lost in a storm at Hampton Roads, Virginia, had been involved with all the multitude problems of a ship owner, including the hiring and firing of crew and ship's officers, crew wages, hiring pilots to take his ship to sea and bring it back, all of this while operating an 8,000-acre plantation, the fisheries, the gristmill, the thousands of acres of land and farms owned by Martha, administering his holdings in the wilderness, heading up the Potomac River Navigation Company, and continuing his involvement with the House of Burgesses and the seeds of revolution that were spreading through the colonies.

On 16 June 1775, Washington was informed officially in Congress of his appointment as General and Commander-In-Chief of the Continental Army. He read his acceptance standing in his place in the assembled group and within days departed to assume command of the troops at Boston. During the time until the end of the Revolution, Washington maintained a steady and detailed direction of his farms and affairs by correspondence with his farm managers. The surrender at Yorktown was on 19 October 1781.

In the fall of 1784, Washington made an inspection trip of his holdings west of the Appalachians and in the Ohio River basin, exploring its potential for water transportation. During this trip, he met James Rumsey who sought his endorsement of a mechanical boat that would move upstream against the current using the current to propel it. Washington endorsed the idea, thinking it had potential for towing barges upstream, as he thought ahead to the Potomac Navigation Company. This boat did not work, but a few years later Rumsey invented a jet-propelled, steam-powered boat capable of speeds up to 5 miles per hour. In December 1787, Rumsey successfully demonstrated his steam-powered boat on the Potomac River at Shepherdstown, West Virginia. A one-half scale replica of this craft this was demonstrated several years ago at Mount Vernon and is still displayed by the Rumseian Society in Shepherdstown. Washington arrived home from this trip in early October, having covered 680 miles.

January 1785 saw a change in Washington's diaries. Previously, diary and daily weather observations were made separately. In this month, he acquired a thermometer and began recording the weather and temperatures in his diary. Unfortunately, we cannot use the recorded temperatures for an accurate understanding of the weather in those days. He had read an article that said thermometers should be placed in an unheated room on the north





Figure 8. The "Rumseian Experiment," a one-half scale replica of James Rumsey's steam propelled boat, as seen at Mount Vernon, July 1991. Photograph taken by Donald B. Leach.

side of the house. Initially, however, he placed his thermometer in the Mount Vernon study, a heated room on the south side of the house. When he realized the error of this, he moved it to the alcove at the foot of the back stairs. Regardless of placement, the temperature was faithfully recorded three times a day, even in his absence. After one such absence, he copied the readings into his diary, noting with dry humor that these were the temperatures according to Mrs. Washington. One thing these records do show is that in winter, one moved from heated room to heated room very quickly. Many readings of 12 to 18 degrees were recorded in the alcove. On some days, the mercury was recorded as being in the ball, below measurement. This was a particularly cold January. On 18 January, four ships had passed, the first movement since 4 January, due to the river being frozen solid.

In April, it was fishing time again. He wrote that he had sent the seine and the hands to the ferry landing to commence fishing for Douglas and Smith of Alexandria. They had agreed to take all the shad and herring that could be caught in the season, the shad at 15 shillings a hundred count and the herring at 4 shillings a thousand. In May, the brig *Caesar* arrived at the Mount Vernon Wharf on its way to Alexandria. This was quite common an

occurrence since many of the sea captains were personal friends. Throughout July and August, he was busy with the business of the Potomac River Navigation Company, inspecting the progress of the canal and lock building.

In December 1785 and January 1786, his boats were on almost daily trips to Alexandria. They delivered flour and returned with tons of iron, salt for the fisheries, and shuttled to the farms of Martha's deceased son bringing back thousands of bushels of corn. The fishing season in 1786 was very poor with almost no herring and only a few shad being taken. The season was ended on 10 May and the seines were placed in storage. On 21 May, his boat returned from a trip to the Popes Creek Plantation, bringing back magnolia plants, some live oak, and sour orange seedlings. After a quiet fall, in December he landed 200 bushels of oats from an Eastern Shore vessel. In February, the Eastern Shore vessel delivered another 800 bushels of corn. Washington requested and received another 1,200 bushels, delivered by the schooner *Molly & Betsey*.

In January 1787, a boat builder arrived at Mount Vernon to build a fishing boat. Mr. Smith was to be paid 8 shillings per foot and a pint of rum per day. This appeared to be a point where the size of the boat could be determined from the account book of wages paid. Unfortunately, this did not materialize as the account was settled with an entry for building and repairing boats.

In 1787, Washington faced a new problem. The fisheries were producing a moderate catch but he had no customers. In May, he began the first attempt to make use of the by-products of the fisheries, the massive amounts of fish heads and innards. The diary noted that he ordered a few fish heads, innards, etc. to be put into some of the corn hills to try the effect of them as fertilizer.<sup>20</sup>

May, June, and July 1787 were spent in Philadelphia attending the Constitutional Convention. There were a few light workdays during this period and Washington used these to fish for trout near his old headquarters at Valley Forge. During August, he managed a trip to Trenton where he fished for perch.

The year 1788 began with bitter cold weather at Mount Vernon. In January, a boat with 130 barrels of corn was frozen in the river near the Mount Vernon wharf and unable to unload. The temperature hovered around 5 degrees and the river was completely closed. Washington left Mount Vernon on 12 January for an inspection of the progress of the Potomac River Navigation Company, noting in a letter to a friend that he expected to be gone from home for ten or more days of cold houses and bad beds.<sup>21</sup> The cold spell continued on into February with the river remaining frozen solid.

Finally, the winter ended. By 1 April, the fishing season arrived with 15 shad and a few hundred herring being caught. Two days later, the shad catch had increased to 500 and the herring to 50,000. Washington noted on 19 April that the effect of the fish manure put into the corn hills the previous May was visible almost as far as the eye could see. As fast as it had begun, the fish run ended with Washington complaining that he had many customers and no fish. On 28 April, it was noted that the people were busy removing the offal of the fish harvest and plowing it into the fields. No fish were being caught but a new project had started. A ship had arrived bringing in the pre-cut lumber for Washington's new treading barn, about 22,000 board feet in this load. Fishing ended about 5 May with a total value of only 60 pounds sterling. In addition, he delivered 68,000 herring to the company supplying lumber for the barn, worth 17 pounds in partial payment.

Throughout this spring, there were numerous boat arrivals at the Mount Vernon wharf, mainly bringing in corn. Late in the month, the sloop *Charming Polly*, the Philadelphia packet boat, arrived with supplies for the plantation. This was a regularly scheduled service between Philadelphia and Alexandria. Since the captain was a friend of Washington's, he would stop at Mount Vernon to save Washington the bother of going to Alexandria to claim his goods.

On 9 June, a miniature full-rigged ship, the 15-foot *Federalist* arrived at Mount Vernon. It was a gift from the merchants of Baltimore to show their appreciation for Washington's service as Commander-In-Chief.

Then came 24 July 1788, with the thermometer at 70 in the morning, 71 at noon and 74 at night. There was a very high northeast wind all night, which, in the morning was accompanied by rain and became a hurricane. The miniature ship *Federalist* was torn from her moorings and sank. The hurricane blew down trees in the groves and about the houses at Mount Vernon. At Alexandria, the storm was reported to have brought in the highest tide that had ever been seen on the river. The damage done to tobacco, sugar, salt, etc. in the warehouses was figured at 5,000 pounds sterling.

Washington arrived in New York for his inauguration as first President on 23 April 1789. During his arrival on a barge rowed by a uniformed crew, he was hailed by gun salutes, music and great festivity. By the fall of the year, he was ready to see some of this new nation. During the period 15 October to 13 November, he toured the country, traveling from New York to New Hampshire.

This tour and his account of it are notable for his interest in the shipping, shipbuilding, fishing, and products of the area. He stopped frequently to ask questions of the citizens about their methods of doing things, comparing their way with what was familiar in Virginia. He was particularly

interested in the duck and canvas mills, reflecting his desire to see the colonies become self-sufficient in all areas of the economy. He managed one recreational fishing trip while in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, fishing off New Castle Island for cod. The account states that the tide was wrong and fishing poor but a man named Zebulon Wiley in a boat accompanying the group hooked a cod, passing the line to Washington for him to boat. Mr. Wiley received a silver dollar from Washington in appreciation. During this visit to Portsmouth, Washington renewed acquaintances with a Captain John Blunt, who had steered Washington's boat during the famous crossing of the Delaware River during the Revolution.

In the spring of 1791, Washington made an overland tour of the southern states, covering over 1,800 miles. Again, he expressed great interest in the farming and the development of the waterways in the vicinity of Charleston, South Carolina. Departing Philadelphia on 23 March, he recorded:

Set off at 6 [AM], breakfasted at Warwick, bated with hay 9 miles farther and lodged at the house of one Worrell in Chester, From whence I sent an express to Rock Hall to have boats ready for me by 9 o'clock tomorrow after doing which, Capt[ai]n Nicholson obligingly set out for that place. Left Chestertown about 6 o'clock. Before 9 I arrived at Rock Hall where we breakfasted and immediately after, we began to embark.<sup>22</sup>

Consider for a moment a comparison with modern day presidential travel. Continuing:

The doing of which [embarking], for want of contrivance until near three o'clock and then one of my servants and two horses were left. Notwithstanding two boats in aid of the two ferryboats were procured. Unluckily, embarking on board of a borrowed boat because she was the largest, I was in imminent danger from the unskillfulness of the hands and the dullness of her sailing, added to the darkness and storminess of the night. For two hours after we hoisted the sail, the wind was light and ahead. The next hour was a stark calm after which the wind sprung up at So[uth]east and increased until it blew a gale. About which time and after 8 o'clock P.M. we made the mouth of the Severn River but the ignorance of the people on board with respect to the navigation of it run us aground on Greenbury Point from whence with much exertion and difficulty we got off, and then having no knowledge of the channel and the night being immensely dark with heavy and variable squalls of wind, constant lightning and tremendous thunder, we soon grounded again on what is called Hornes Point where finding all efforts in vain and not knowing where we were, we remained till morning. Friday the 25th, having lain all night in my great coat and boots, in a berth not long enough for me by a head and much cramped, we found ourselves within about

a mile of Annapolis and still fast aground. A Sailing boat came to our assistance in which with the baggage I had on board, I landed.<sup>23</sup>

This was the start of a five-month trip and was followed a few days later by his horses falling off a ferry while crossing the Occoquan River in Virginia, almost pulling the chariot with them.

In 1797, having completed two terms as President, he stepped down at his own request and retired to his beloved Mount Vernon where he died on 14 December 1799.

During the years covered by this article, the following types of watercraft were noted as being built or used by George Washington in the operation of his fisheries, farming operations or business enterprises:

Flatboats—Built at Mount Vernon or purchased.

Barges—One at Mount Vernon, one given to Washington at his inauguration.

Hogshead Flat—Purchased.

Whaleboat—Purchased for him by the Governor of Maryland.

Ferryboats—Numerous, from Posey's Ferry and built at Mount Vernon with estimated life expectancy of about five years.

Schooner—One old, one new built at Mount Vernon.

Yawl—May have been confused with schooner or sailing barge.

Bateaux—Purchased locally.

Brigantine—Purchased by Washington. This and the brig are the same ship, *Farmer*, depending on how it was rigged.

Fishing Boats—Numerous, built at Mount Vernon.

It is unfortunate that the records do not contain details of the sizes, capacities, and general descriptions of these craft or more information on the builders or the costs associated with building or purchase. It is possible to look at replicas and drawings of watercraft of this era and, from them, gain a fairly good idea of what Washington's "fleet" must have looked like, since many builders kept detailed records of their work.

Also of interest is at the financial contribution of Washington's fisheries to the economic well-being of the plantation. Looking at three years, as a sample, we can sense the impact of the fisheries on generating a part of the 375 pounds sterling required to break-even:

Year	Herring Catch	Shad Catch	Contracted Sales Value	Local Sales Value
1770	473,750	4,623	102 pounds sterling	25 pounds sterling
1771	1,004,200	7,760	134 pounds sterling	30 pounds sterling
1772	1,300,000	10,894	184 pounds sterling	42 pounds sterling

For 1772, the fisheries contributed approximately sixty percent of the required income, as well as providing a major food source for the slaves.

What became evident during the research for this article was that George Washington was a truly remarkable and superior individual with a keen and inquiring mind. He had a great capacity to learn, to explore new ideas, and had the ability to handle a great number of difficult tasks simultaneously. His calmness under stress helped steady the founders of the nation as they deliberated on how to accomplish the task of bringing the new nation into being. The research also showed a man who was an astute businessman, able to maximize assets to achieve his goals. He was a man who could develop a great enthusiasm for new ventures, but once they were either in progress or well along, he would lose interest to another task or idea. Washington's efforts to develop the fisheries and his fleet of small craft were for the sole purpose of supporting the farm, his one true love at Mount Vernon.

## Acknowledgements

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The American Heritage Dictionary, Second College Edition.

<sup>2</sup> *The Diaries of George Washington, Volume I, 1748-65*, 214.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

<sup>4</sup> *The Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series, Volume 6, September 1758-December 1760*, 414.

<sup>5</sup> *The Diaries of George Washington, Volume I*, 261 (footnote).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 261.

- <sup>7</sup> Ibid., 265.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid., 265-266.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid., 266.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., 269.
- <sup>11</sup> *The Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series, Volume 6*, 462.
- <sup>12</sup> *The Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series, Volume 7, January 1761-June 1767*, 27.
- <sup>13</sup> *The Diaries of George Washington, Volume I*, 341.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid., 343.
- <sup>15</sup> *The Diaries of George Washington, Volume II, 1766-70*, 217.
- <sup>16</sup> *The Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series, Volume 8, June 1767-December 1771*, 385.
- <sup>17</sup> *The Diaries of George Washington, Volume II*, 299.
- <sup>18</sup> *The Diaries of George Washington, Volume III, 1771-1775, 1780-81*, 24.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., 240-241 (footnote).
- <sup>20</sup> *The Diaries of George Washington, Volume V, July 1786-December 1789*, 152-153.
- <sup>21</sup> *The Papers of George Washington, Confederation Series, Volume 6, January-September 1788*, 38.
- <sup>22</sup> *The Diaries of George Washington, Volume VI, January 1790-December 1799*, 99-101.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., 101.

# Colchester, 1999

By  
Michael Ritzer

*Mr. Ritzer was born in Lynchburg, Virginia, and raised in Colchester, Virginia. In the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade he was presented with a medal by the DAR for writing an essay on Bull Run. It was this essay that sparked both his interest in Colchester and colonial archaeology. He contributed research to Colchester: Colonial Port on the Potomac. A graduate of Virginia Wesleyan College, he currently resides in Lincolnton, North Carolina.*

Colchester, sweet maiden from the past,

Sadly, your life could not last!

The days, the years are all but gone.

Still, the glories that are yours

continue to live on.

The people, the shops yet will remain,

contain'd in memory to live again.

The mighty hogsheads will roll once more.

The ferry will travel to the southern shore.

Henderson's store will be full again,

with goods brought over from foreign lands.

Fairfax Arms—full to capacity!

The Madeira again will flow,

warming travelers as they go



To Williamsburg or to Philadelphia.  
Talk of politics and religion will reign supreme.  
Each opinion held in high esteem.  
Morgan, Jefferson, Washington and Mason, too,  
will stroll through your dusty streets—  
Dreaming of America's future fame  
And of Liberty's never-ending flame.  
The Church again will take its place,  
within the town, endowed with grace.  
Sermons will echo through  
The minds of those prepar'd to learn  
Take the challenge—the world to spurn.  
The stage once more will be born again,  
With songs and plays and jovial, merry men!  
Alas, these scenes are gone!  
Yet, they continue to live in hearts and minds.  
Sweet Maid of Yore—  
You've gained a place in History.  
And helped secure Virginia's destiny!

# Oak Grove Revisited

By  
Jack Lewis Hiller

*Jack Lewis Hiller lives in West Springfield. He has been a member of the Fairfax County History Commission since 1981 and currently chairs the Historical Marker Committee. Hiller taught history for 30 years at Groveton High School and West Potomac High School. He also taught history at Northern Virginia Community College. He was co-founder of the Fairfax County Public School's summer archaeology program that operated between 1973 and 1988. He writes and speaks on topics about the Springfield area, is a volunteer archaeologist with the Fairfax County Park Authority and a volunteer docent at Gunston Hall. He has contributed essays to the last three editions of the Yearbook.*

Looking out at us from the nineteenth century are John Hewitson Broders (1797-1860) and Elizabeth Compton Broders (1801-1872). They were married on 26 December 1822 and three years later acquired 394 acres

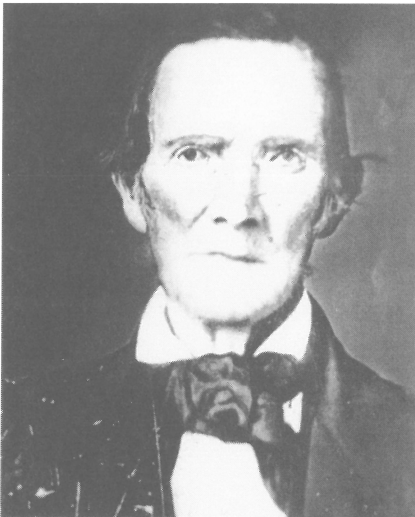


Figure 1. John Hewitson Broders



Figure 2. Elizabeth Compton Broders

along the south side of Franconia Road where it intersects with the modern Frontier Drive. There they built a house, which became known as Oak Grove. The clothes they wear mark their moment in time as their faces show its passage. We know the future they could only anticipate—and beyond.

John Broders expanded his landholdings to approximately 1,000 acres on both sides of Franconia Road (then known as Old Fairfax Road), which he farmed. The Broders raised two boys and five girls on that land. But John would not live to see invading soldiers occupy his farm. He could never know that one of his daughters would unknowingly marry a Confederate spy who would mysteriously abandon their marriage and disappear.

The weight of operating a farm and protecting a family surrounded by the anarchy fell upon the shoulders of Elizabeth. After her death, twelve years later than his, the farm was divided among six of their seven children. The family home stood for another 123 years. It shaped the lives of four additional families who, in turn, would alter it to fit their purposes.

The story of Oak Grove's transformation from farm to post office to suburban home and its final demise on 15 June 1995 to make way for the Sunrise Assisted Living facility can be found in *Yearbook: Volume 26, The Historical Society of Fairfax County, Virginia, Inc., 1997-1998*. These portraits of John and Elizabeth Broders were provided by Patricia Collins of Wichita, Kansas, after the original article was printed and are published here with her permission.

**Mexican War:**  
**The Final Muster Roll of Company L,**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Volunteer Infantry**  
**(a.k.a. Fairfax's Company, Thrift's Company, 13<sup>th</sup> Company)**  
**March 18, 1847 - July 27, 1848**

By  
W. Page Johnson, II

*Mr. Johnson is the elected Commissioner of the Revenue for the City of Fairfax. He is a graduate of George Mason University and is the author of Brothers and Cousins: Confederate Soldiers and Sailors of Fairfax County, Virginia. He is President of the Historical Society of Fairfax County and also a board member of the Historic Fairfax City, Inc. Mr. Johnson is a fifth generation native of Fairfax, an eleventh generation Virginian and a direct lineal descendant of two signers of the Declaration of Independence — Thomas Nelson, Jr. and Carter Braxton.*

Thrift, James, Capt.  
Dulaney, James H., 1<sup>st</sup> Lt.  
Herbert, Upton H., 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt.  
Moore, Thomas, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt.  
Bishop, Charles, 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt.  
Waldon, James F., 2<sup>nd</sup> Sgt.  
Thrift, Benjamin F., 3<sup>rd</sup> Sgt.  
Burke, Abdon L., 4<sup>th</sup> Sgt.  
Davis, Augustus, 1<sup>st</sup> Cpl.  
White, George W., 2<sup>nd</sup> Cpl.  
Moore, John L., 3<sup>rd</sup> Cpl.  
Day, James, 4<sup>th</sup> Cpl.

Ballenger, John, Pvt.  
Brown, Andrew, Pvt.  
Brown, Samuel, Pvt.

Bruce, Winfield S., Pvt.  
Byrnes, John, Pvt.  
Churchill, James, Pvt.  
Dantt, William T., Pvt.  
Day, John, Pvt.  
Dyer, Robert, Pvt.  
Dykes, Joel R., Pvt.  
Evans, Henry, Pvt.  
Evans, John, Pvt.  
Gately, Patrick, Pvt.  
Givens, James E., Pvt.  
Griffith, James, Pvt.  
Gunnell, John R., Pvt.  
Hagan, William, Pvt.  
Haines, Charles F., Pvt.  
Hamilton, Edward L., Pvt.

Jenkins, William H., Pvt.  
Kerr, George, Pvt.  
Kitchen, Caleb, Pvt.  
Lakeman, Abner J., Pvt.  
Lindsay, Opie, Pvt.  
Mansell, James J., Pvt.  
McDonald, John A., Pvt.  
Millan, James R., Pvt.  
Mills, Armistead S., Pvt.  
Mills, Henry, Pvt.  
O'Bannon, Dagobert B., Pvt.  
Patterson, Charles, Pvt.  
Ratcliffe, Thomas, Pvt.  
Richards, George F., Pvt.  
Richards, Henry C., Pvt.  
Richards, John R., Pvt.  
Robey, William, Pvt.  
Sheckles, Samuel, Pvt.  
Smith, Abijah B., Pvt.  
Smith, James L., Pvt.  
Stark, Ebenezer E., Pvt.  
Waugh, John, Pvt.  
Wilson, Frances S., Pvt.  
Wren, Charles B., Pvt.  
Wright, John T., Pvt.

## **Died**

Fairfax, Henry, Capt.  
Mills, Mahlon, Pvt.  
Mills, Robert, Pvt.

Trott, Samuel, Pvt.  
West, Charles, Pvt.

## **Discharged**

Richard, Young, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt.  
Barnard, John B. F., Pvt.  
Bennett, John A., Pvt.  
Berry, Thomas, Pvt.  
Clemments, James H., Pvt.  
Conroy, James J., Pvt.  
Corrie, William W., Pvt.  
Creamer, Jacob, Pvt.  
Dean, James, Pvt.  
Deneal, James C., Pvt.  
Eaton, Henry, Pvt.  
Fenwick, Maury, Pvt.  
Hull, John, Pvt.  
Kelly, William, Pvt.  
Kennedy, Charles, Pvt.  
McCoy, George M., Pvt.  
Steward, James, Pvt.  
Tuttle, Joseph, Pvt.  
West, James, Pvt.

## **Deserted**

Bryant, Richard, Cpl.  
Allen, William, Pvt.  
Gardner, James, Pvt.  
Newall, James, Pvt.

## **Source**

Muster Roll of Company L, 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Regiment of Volunteers, Record Group 94, Entry 57, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D. C.

# The Bailey Family: From Menagerie to Crossroads

By  
Naomi Sokol Zeavin

*Naomi Sokol Zeavin is a member of the Fairfax County History Commission. Ms. Zeavin is a producer for Channel 10, having researched, produced, and directed over a dozen history videos including the national award winning Battle of Cedar Creek. She was the associate producer and research editor for the Fairfax County history videos Occupied Territory: Fairfax County During the Civil War and G. Washington and Fairfax. She directed and produced the film Journey to Augustow in Poland that is in the National Holocaust Museum. Having lived in the Bailey's Crossroads area since 1956, she currently is preparing a museum exhibit on the Bailey family that will be on display beginning in mid-May 2002 at the Clark House in Falls Church, Virginia.*

On a cold day in January of 2001 I drove to the town of Somers in Westchester County, New York. Somers is the hometown of Hachaliah Bailey, the founder of what is now called Bailey's Crossroads in Fairfax County, Virginia. I had read the book *Elephants and Quaker Guns* and felt the need to answer a question still asked about our Falls Church neighborhood: Did a circus winter at Bailey's Crossroads?

A smiling Frank Billingsley, who is a past president of the Somers Historical Society, met me. We began our tour at the Elephant Hotel, which now is the City Hall. In its day it was considered the finest hotel between New York City and Albany, New York. The top floor of the hotel now houses the Somers Historical Society as well as the Circus Museum. A portrait of the hotel's builder, Hachaliah Bailey, hangs on the center wall. Construction was begun in 1820 and completed in 1825.

In the snow and rain we then visited the gravesites of Bailey and his wife, the former Mary Rafter Purdy. The tall plain granite shaft that marks his grave is inscribed:

Died September 2, 1845 age 70 years  
Enterprise: Perseverance: Integrity  
Hachaliah married Mary Rafter Purdy,  
born 1784 and died 1871



*Figure 1. Hachaliah Bailey. Illustration courtesy of the Somers Historical Society.*

Mary and Hachaliah had several daughters and four sons. The sons' names were Lewis, Joseph, James, and Stephan.<sup>1</sup>

The history of the Bailey family goes all the way back to the founding days of the United States. They emigrated from England to Stephentown (now known as Somers), New York. In 1743 Bailey's great-grandfather, Hachaliah Brown, acquired several hundred acres of land in Somers. In 1760, he deeded about one-half of the acreage to his son, Hachaliah Brown,

Jr. The son was a patriot and voted as such in 1768. He was elected Supervisor of Somers at the first town meeting in 1788.<sup>2</sup>

Brown, Jr.'s daughter Ann married James Bailey.<sup>3</sup> Their son Hachaliah Bailey was born in 1775. He grew to be a man of vision and honesty who believed in hard work. At various times he operated a profitable toll gate, was a drover, owned cattle, was a farmer, and owned a stage coach line that ran from Danbury, Connecticut to Sing Sing, New York. The enterprising businessman also had a sloop docked at Sing Sing that he used for transporting cattle down the Hudson River to the stockyards and a slaughterhouse located in the Bowery. There was a popular gathering place there called Bull's Head Tavern. Here Hachaliah Bailey came in contact with seamen and made profitable business deals.<sup>4</sup>

Bailey and John Owen, his brother-in-law, were business partners in a store. In 1798 Owen bought the first elephant imported to the United States. The female elephant arrived in Philadelphia from India. Owen paid \$10,000 for her. He exhibited her until she died in 1806.<sup>5</sup> When Bailey saw the profits gained from exhibiting an elephant, it influenced him to buy the second elephant brought to this country. And so began the association of the Bailey name with elephants.

In 1809, about four years after she arrived in Boston, Massachusetts, Bailey was introduced to Betty (or Old Bet) the Elephant. He exhibited her until a Maine farmer shot her in 1816. The farmer, Donald Darus, felt it was sinful for poor people to spend one shilling of their hard-earned money to see some wicked beast.<sup>6</sup>

With two partners, Bailey imported a third elephant; this one was also called Betty (now referred to as Little Bet). She was shot in 1829 while being shown in Chepachet, Rhode Island. Seven men were responsible for the shooting. Two of the men were dropped from the Masonic Order for the deed.<sup>7</sup> Bailey and his partners imported the fourth elephant, called Columbus, who was the first male elephant in the United States. Columbus died of an injury in 1829.<sup>8</sup>

Hachaliah Bailey was a shrewd entrepreneur and saw an opportunity to expand his business. In 1808 when he bought one-third interest of another elephant with Andre Bruin and Benjamin Lent, he took one-fourth of his earnings on the elephant in exchange for the ownership of Lent's recently purchased Royal Tiger. Now Bailey had the first traveling menagerie in America. He decided to call it "The Educational Show." Exhibiting the menagerie all over New York state as well as parts of New England and charging 25 cents admission earned him, in 1823 for example, \$8,000. In today's dollars this is equivalent to \$100,000.<sup>9</sup>



No first hand description of the content or mode of travel of The Educational Show has been found. However, an article in the *Crown-In-Shield Elephant* newspaper describes it as consisting of four wagons, a trained dog, several pigs, a horse and an elephant. Benjamin Brown, a cousin who once took the menagerie on tour, mentioned a lion and bears. Bailey loved animals and trained many of them himself.<sup>10</sup>

Although P. T. Barnum and Hachaliah Bailey never had any working relationship, Barnum thought so highly of him that he wrote the following in his 1885 autobiography:

Hachaliah Bailey was a man of enterprise, a large property owner and originator of the menagerie business in this country.<sup>11</sup>

He continued to invest in the menagerie business when he turned to the construction of the Elephant Hotel in 1820. The hotel was completed in 1825. Huge barns were erected to the rear of the hotel for guests to house their coaches, wagons and animals.



Figure 2. Elephant Hotel in Somers, New York circa 1900. Photograph courtesy of the Somers Historical Society.



*Figure 3. A January 2001 photograph of Old Bet's statue that stands near the Elephant Hotel. Taken by Naomi Sokol Zeavin.*

On a triangular piece of land in front of his Elephant Hotel, Bailey had an elephant statue erected in memory of his first elephant, Old Bet. Installed in 1827, the shaft of dressed granite rests on a double stone base and extends upward 15 feet. Wrought iron scroll work about three feet high tops the shaft and supports a wooden elephant measuring three feet high by four feet long. A modern day photograph of the statue is shown above in figure 3; an historic photograph of it illustrates this *Yearbook's* back cover.

On January 14, 1835, menagerie and circus owners of Northern Westchester and Putnam counties met at the Elephant Hotel to form the Zoological Institute. The objective of the Zoological Institute was to diffuse and promote the knowledge of natural history and gratify rational curiosity. Nine established menageries were combined under a Board of Directors. Initial capitalization amounted to \$329, 325. Although Bailey had retired from the menagerie touring business ten years earlier, he hosted this meeting at his hotel. He did not sign the organizing document. Instead, he let his son Lewis sign it.

During the mid-1800s, the number of traveling shows, menageries and circuses increased. Many of the proprietors and performers were relatives and neighbors of the Bailey family. Outstanding among these was their

neighbor J. Purdy Brown. Brown was highly respected and his partner was none other than Hachaliah's son, Lewis Bailey. They both are in the circus record book for presenting the first canvas circus tent to the United States.<sup>12</sup>

These pioneering adventurers took their tours to Virginia and Washington, DC—in addition to the Mississippi Valley. Lewis was a great showman, a talented equestrian, and also acted as a circus clown. Alexandria's *Gazette* newspaper advertised the visits of their circus here beginning in 1824 through 1829. The following advertisement is from 3 December 1824:

The managers of the circus beg leave respectfully to inform the citizens of Alexandria that they will give the first equestrian exhibition on Thursday evening, December 15 at their building, corner of Washington and Queens Street...A Grand Entry of eight beautiful horses with Clown Lewis.

Although the circus did not have any wild animals until 1830, circus goers were promised other thrills such as those described in an excerpt from the 29 December 1828 *Gazette*:

Mr. Bailey, Horsemanship will introduce a horse trained in a short space of time that will partake of the collection at the table and leap bars etc., etc....A Grand Trampoline by Mr. Lewis, who will turn a Somerset [somer-sault] through a Balloon on Fire!! Box 50 cents, Pit 25 cents.<sup>13</sup>

Hachaliah Bailey bought the land that is now known as Bailey's Crossroads in December of 1837. Circus historian Stuart Thayer surmises that Lewis Bailey saw this land while touring with his circus in Alexandria. This attractive piece of property contained a little over 536 acres. The plot surrounded the crossing of two major turnpikes: Leesburg and Columbia. With roads extending for miles north and south and west, Hachaliah could see its advantageous location.

This land dated back to 1729 when King George II of England granted the property to Simon Pearson. The title changed hands several times until William Randolph, from whom Bailey bought the land, finally acquired it. He paid \$6,000 in cash for the property.<sup>14</sup> The boundaries started at the point where the old Bailey School was on Columbia Pike, went down to the old firehouse on Route 7, and then back up to Carlin Springs Road where St. Anthony's Catholic Church is today.

By this time, Hachaliah Bailey and his son Lewis had both retired from menagerie and circus life forever. Thayer said he could find no proof that the circus ever wintered at Bailey's Crossroads. I agree after researching

# CIRCUS.

On **SATURDAY EVENING, DEC. 24,**  
The performance will commence with a new  
**Grand Entree**

under directions of Mr Sibery, Clown Lewis.

Mr. Bailey will introduce a Horse, trained in  
a short space of time, that will partake of a  
collation at the Table, and leap Bars, &c. &c.

**Sports of the Ring**

## **HORSEMANSHIP**

By Mr. Foster, in which he will shew how  
to ease a horse in fox chase.

**CORPUSCULAR MANOEUVRES;**

or,

**Ground & Lofty Tumbling**

by Messrs. Turner, Myers, Foster, Seargant &  
Clown Lewis.

**HORSEMANSHIP,**

by Master Seargant, on two Shetland Ponies,  
in which he will jump his whip, hoop, garters  
and conclude by jumping through a

## **BALLOON**

with the Ponies at speed.

## **HORSEMANSHIP**

By Mr. Turner,

**WITHOUT SADDLE or BRIDLE,**

**STILL VAULTING.**

To conclude with the laughable Farce of the

**HUNTED TAILOR;**

Or, *Mr. Button's Unfortunate Journey to  
Brentford.*

Billy Button

Master

Clown

Mr. Sibery,

Mr. Turner,

Mr. Lewis.

Box 50 cents. Pit 25

Tickets may be had from 12 to 1 o'clock at  
the Circus, and at any time at Mr. Runnell's  
and Mr. Tyler's Lottery Offices.

No smoking. Segars allowed.

Figure 4. From The Alexandria Gazette, an advertisement announcing clown Lewis Bailey's upcoming performance of "corpuscular manoeuvres" involving "ground & lofty tumbling."

locally, as do direct descendants of the Bailey family who attended the dedication of the Bailey's Crossroads historical marker in 2001.

More distant relations of the Bailey family, however, are associated with circus life. Frederick Bailey, a nephew of Hachaliah Bailey, adopted an orphan James (Jim) McGinnis, who went on to have his own circus, then merged and became partners with P. T. Barnum to form the "Greatest Show on Earth." This was the first circus to go worldwide. Sam Bailey, a fifth generation grandson of Hachaliah, said a lost letter stated that Frederick Bailey was the real father of James McGinnis. Cousin George Bailey and his partner took over management of P. T. Barnum & Bailey from 1876 to 1880.<sup>15</sup>

Lewis and his wife Maria came to Virginia with Hachaliah to help manage the new property. The name found on the original deed reads Moray Tract. Many historians have written that a mansion existed on the land when it was bought. Bailey descendants interviewed, however, feel this is not true. "Perhaps there existed some small structure on the land," great-grandson Horace Bailey and great-granddaughter Evelyn Bailey chimed in.

Also on the property was Joseph Banne's rambling wood frame Tavern Inn that had closed down some twenty years earlier. Maria and Lewis renovated the tavern building. They operated it during the Civil War; it was a popular place. After the war they added it onto the Mansion.<sup>16</sup> The families feel that Lewis and Maria built what became known as Moray Mansion, adding on sections as the years went by. Horace, who was born and raised at Moray, said, "There were about 68 rooms in Moray."

Hachaliah Bailey never lived permanently at Moray, but visited often and spent summers there. In 1843 he turned over the deed of the property to his daughter-in-law Maria.<sup>17</sup> There is much speculation on why he did this. Perhaps Maria was a better businessperson than Lewis? Two years after giving the land to his children, Hachaliah was home at Somers when he was kicked by a ferocious horse and died.

Maria and Lewis made a great team. Maria ran Moray and Lewis did all of the outside work. They had ten children: one daughter, Elizabeth, and nine sons. Each child was taught to have some kind of trade and talent, engaging in their tasks on the premises. The sons all had different professions: Walter was a landscaper; Theodore was a carpenter; William operated the Bailey's Dairy stand at old Riggs Market in Washington, DC; Roy was a blacksmith; Horace was a veterinarian; George was a businessman. The three youngest boys were Henry, Harvey, and Oscar. Oscar moved to Georgia.<sup>18</sup>



Figure 5. Shown standing in the back row (l. to r.) are George, Henry, Roy, Horace and William. Seated (l. to r.) in front of them are Theodore, Oscar, Harvey and Walter.

In 1860, Lewis Bailey was considered a prosperous farmer with real estate valued at \$20,000 and personal property valued at \$2,500. The inventory of his farm showed his wealth at 20 cows, four horses, two working oxen, and ten hogs.<sup>19</sup> According to granddaughter Margaret Gordon Bailey (quoted in a 1960 issue of the *Sun Echo*), Lewis was called “the outsider of the farm.” Lewis was a lot like his father in this respect. He was a hardworking, proud man and a man of ideas. Lewis took on a huge job when you say outside work. He continued the family’s cattle business, the family dairy, and the large farm. Lewis managed to obtain the milk concession for Washington, DC’s foremost hotel at the time—the Willard. The Bailey dairy provided the hotel with other dairy products as well.<sup>20</sup>

Lewis would come up with an idea and would see it through to success. To the right of the house he built a huge circular pond surrounded with a high brick wall. The pond was filled with a variety of beautiful imported goldfish. Two of his great-granddaughters, 88-year-old Dodie and 90-year-old Evelyn remember their grandmother Missouri telling them of the beautiful sight of elegant fringed carriages coming down the long lane of Moray

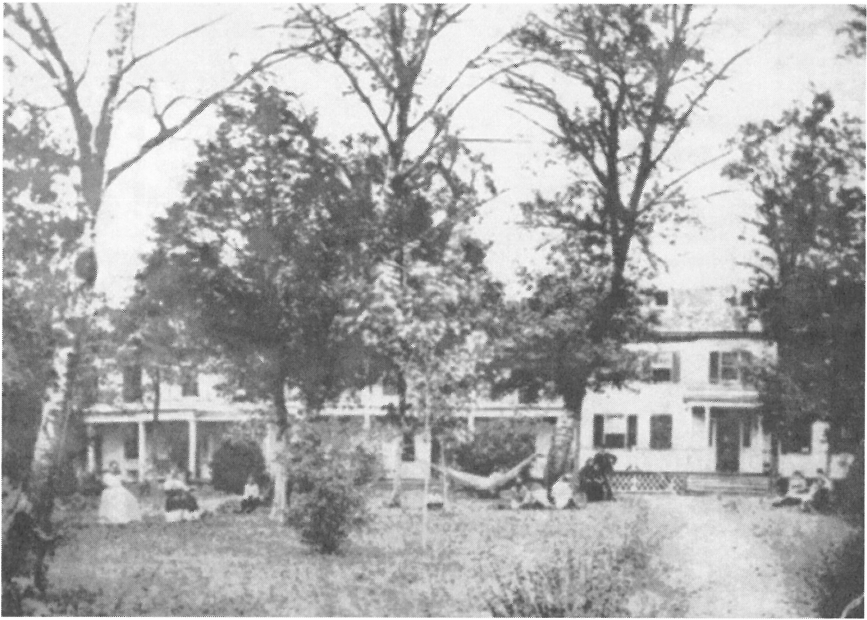


Figure 6. An historic photograph of Moray Mansion.

and handsome horses (the best one could buy) would come strutting up to the Mansion. The lane was lined with tall trees and hanging crape myrtles that came to a curved V-shape as they approached the house. The carriages were then put in the livery stable. Lewis had a great interest in horticulture and planted all kinds of shrubs and trees such as oak, holly, hardy roses, and crape myrtle along the house and Moray Lane.<sup>21</sup>

Great-grandson Horace Bailey says that as Lewis and Maria kept having children, Lewis would build a new portion of the house for them. He would add each section onto Moray. Looking at figure 6, you can see that each side of the main house went out far in length on both sides. This was done in a special way so if any of the children wanted to take their house to land that they were left, they could slide it off the main house and move it.<sup>22</sup>

Maria is described in the *Sun Echo* newspaper by her granddaughter Margaret Gordon Bailey as a small lady with endless endurance, who had a knack with animals and pets that is not seen today. She was also a talented equestrian and one must remember she brought up ten children. She did this successfully while running the boardinghouse.<sup>23</sup>

Lewis and Maria kept the home filled with rare and beautiful furniture, including two authentic Sheraton tables. These tables had belonged

to President George Washington. After Washington died, his adopted son Lawrence sold them at an auction and Lewis bought them. Through Horace Bailey's wife, these tables have been returned to Mount Vernon and are in the main dining room.<sup>24</sup>

All this wonderful quiet life at Moray Mansion came to an end on 12 April 1861 when the Confederate Army fired on Fort Sumter, South Carolina. Lewis Bailey (who had voted against secession) found his land now in the Confederate States of America. Union troops came in late May of 1861. With the battle of First Manassas pending, the Union columns of troops marched westward through Bailey's Crossroads. The Union Army lost the battle and retreated back across the Potomac River into Washington.

From late July until late September 1861, Colonel J. E. B. (Jeb) Stuart's Confederate troops occupied Munson's Hill and Mason's Hill in the Bailey's Crossroads area, and Upton's Hill in nearby Arlington. Life was not easy for the civilians. Five days of skirmishes took place from August 28 to September 1. Union forces occupied the Moray Mansion and its outbuildings. The forts were outposts for both sides and Munson's Hill was the closest of any of the Confederate posts to Washington, DC, throughout the war. There were campsites all around Bailey's Crossroads all the way to where the Skyline Towers complex is today.

It was at Munson's Hill that Colonel Jeb Stuart was promoted to General. Orders to invade Washington never came and in late September Stuart's troops withdrew to the Fairfax Court House. Upon their withdrawal, the Union army moved in and took over Mason's, Munson's, and Upton's hills. The Federal troops occupied the area from late September through the winter of 1861-1862.<sup>25</sup>

During the Civil War many officers such as Quarter Master General Meigs, and other officers and their families, stayed at Moray. They would stay from six weeks to two months. Maria served the officers in the large dining room. During the hot weather, Maria would have a slave stationed in the cellar to pull the cord to make the paper flaps which were attached to the ceiling move to keep the flies off the food.

On the subject of slaves, Lewis stated the following:

I never owned any slaves and for twelve years previous to the [Civil] war, I would not employ a colored man to do a day's work for me. My wife had a colored woman in the house and she had two children bound out to her, but after the war commenced, they were free.<sup>26</sup>

One cold winter night during the Civil War, Lewis and Maria's spirited daughter Elizabeth ran to Columbia Pike to meet her beaux, Union soldier







George W. Francis.<sup>27</sup> She hopped into his carriage and they eloped to Alexandria—to the surprise and consternation of her parents.<sup>28</sup> Although she defied her parents' wishes to marry, records show that when the land was divided up, Elizabeth was given one-third more land than her nine brothers each received.<sup>29</sup> Sam Bailey (a great-great-grandson of Lewis and Maria) always understood that Elizabeth was estranged from her brothers. When shown the deed with the division of the land drawn out, he said, "Now I know why."<sup>30</sup>

After the Union Army's defeat at Manassas, President Abraham Lincoln and General George B. McClellan decided to have a Grand Review at Bailey's Crossroads. It was spectacular. The Grand Review took place on 11 November 1861. There were 50,000 troops. The field chosen was the broad plain leading up from Bailey's Crossroads to Munson's Hill. The area had been cleared of timber and undergrowth, leaving an open area of about one square mile. President Lincoln, Mrs. Lincoln, and Cabinet members rode in carriages up from Washington. President Lincoln first went to view Munson's Hill, and then he came down to Bailey's Crossroads along with diplomats and Cabinet members to view the troops. Soon after 11 a.m. Major General McClellan took his position upon a knoll near the Bailey's house, while the body of troops passed in review. This was the largest body of troops ever reviewed on this continent up to that time. Much of the wood cleared or cut came from the Munson land where he had a huge nursery and from the Bailey farm. President and Mrs. Lincoln had tea at Moray following the review.<sup>31</sup>

Another important event took place at Bailey's Crossroads during the Civil War when poet Julia Ward Howe and her husband were invited to attend a review of Union troops on 18 November 1861. As their carriage approached the crossroads after the review on their way back to the Willard Hotel there was the threat of Confederate attack, forcing them to move quickly and evacuate the area. On their long way back to Washington, to make the time pass, they sang songs. The trip would take half a day to get to DC. One song they were singing, *John Brown's Body*, seemed to get the soldiers excited and they cheered them on, joining in the song. She was so moved at seeing the soldiers guarding the area and sitting around the campfires that when she got back to the Willard she wrote the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*.<sup>32</sup>

In June of 1871 Lewis Bailey (now 67 years old) subpoenaed the federal government for damages incurred during the Civil War. He stated in his deposition that:

I made myself a little more active at our election to elect Bell and Everett than I have done for many years, or perhaps in my life. I helped get up a barbeque, sent my four-horse omnibus to the polls and back and obtained a band of music.... I had 320 acres, five miles from the end of the Long Bridge. About 150 acres were in woods. The wood was taken in January and February 1865 by Col. Green, quartermaster. He sent word that it would have to be cut for the government. 895 cords taken.<sup>33</sup>

Lewis did not receive any compensation. In November of 1877, Maria (now 70 years old) presented the same claim to the federal government. Congress later compensated the Baileys for extensive damages.<sup>34</sup>

After the war the farm was still a prosperous place as far as the Baileys were concerned. They now had a summer boarding house taking in the overflow from the Willard Hotel. Guests would flock to spend the pleasant summer hours out in the peace and quiet and fresh air at Moray. To accommodate more guests, the tavern that the Baileys operated during the war was moved up to the main part of Moray. Guests had the lovely fishpond and beautiful flowers and trees with hammocks to sit under and rest and read.<sup>35</sup> Moray was truly a very special place. Great-granddaughter Dodie remembers her grandmother Missouri telling her of the yellow pet canary that Maria was so fond of. When it died she sent it to a taxidermist in New York and kept the delicate preserved bird in glass over the fireplace mantel.<sup>36</sup>

Change came gradually to Bailey's Crossroads. Margaret Gordon Bailey recalled her childhood at the Bailey farm during the 1890s as a peaceful happy life. She would visit her grandmother, Maria, who was confined to bed after breaking her hip in 1895. Maria had two beautiful greyhounds that lay in the hallway outside of her bedroom. Maria managed to run things from her bedroom and it is said she still did an excellent job.<sup>37</sup>

A May 1930 article in the *American Motorist* mentioned the beauty of nature that surrounded Moray Mansion: boxwood, ancient holly, and giant oaks. Flowering bushes—forsythia, roses, and lilacs—added color around the old house. The house and its outbuildings were described in detail:

At Baileys Cross roads, in Fairfax County, stands the original structure, an old frame Mansion known as Bailey's homestead. This stately old place is eclipsed in historic value by only one or two other homes in this vicinity namely Mount Vernon...and the Lee Mansion. Bailey's Crossroads is about like hundreds of other crossroads in Virginia and through out the country, with the usual general store, gasoline station in this instance, and an old deserted blacksmith shop. The old home is situated

near the highway. Brief glimpses of it may be evidence that this age-worn place was a veritable Eden in bygone days, part of the mansion is in ruins but the main body of it still in a livable condition. A big hall runs through the center of it, and on one side of the hall is a spacious dining room and kitchen, just as it was when it was built in 1845.

It also is noted that "...all hinges and bolts of the old Bailey house were hand-wrought. Even the passing of the years could not destroy but rather added to nature's beauty around this old house."<sup>38</sup>

As a widow, Maria sold off several small parcels from the main farm. She also sold sites for St. Paul's Episcopal Church and a school.<sup>39</sup> The latter is now the site of Bailey's Elementary School. The remainder of the estate was divided following her death.

The Estate of West Washington, D.C. December 12, 1894  
Mrs. Maria Bailey

Joseph F. Birch's Sons.  
 Successors to

FUNERAL CALLS PROMPTLY ATTENDED  
 TO AT SHORT NOTICE.

TERMS CASH.

Cor. Bridge and Jefferson Streets.

To cloth cover casket complete		100.00
for Mrs. Maria Bailey		10.00
" Hearse		48.00
" Carriage		3.00
" sending casket to Cemetery		161.00
1894		
March 26	By cash	46.21
		119.79
Nov. 24	Received payment	
	Joseph F. Birch's Sons	

Figure 8. The undertaker's invoice submitted to Maria's estate for the cost of her funeral in 1894.

The part of the Mansion that once was the tavern was detached by a descendant and moved nearer to Leesburg Pike. It was sold to Charles F. Miller. The Fairfax Brewster School has part of the old section of the tavern.

Millard J. Moore of Washington bought Moray Mansion in 1897. The Moore family used it as a summer home until the mid-1930s. The vacant mansion burned down in 1942. Vagrants were occupying it and probably caused the fire. Five chimneys were the only parts of the mansion left standing. Both the Falls Church and Annandale fire departments responded to the blaze but, as reported in the *Sun Echo*, "...the fire, burning rapidly in dry timber was too far advanced to be controlled." A handful of residents of the neighborhood tramped through muddy fields, watched and recalled what they knew about its history. The reporter went on to conclude the article by saying it was a sad ending to a beautiful house that had brought so much joy to the community.<sup>40</sup>

## Epilogue

Life changed at Bailey's Crossroads when an overpass with a cloverleaf was constructed in 1974, crossing Columbia Pike and Route 7. Bailey's Crossroads has become the most diverse neighborhood in Fairfax County and one of the most densely populated.

On 27 March 2001, the Barnum and Bailey Circus paid for the historic marker installed at Bailey's Crossroads. Coinciding with the circus's performance in Northern Virginia, ringmaster Kevin Venardos and some clowns came along to entertain. They also gave out popcorn as we had many young people attend, including students from the Fairfax Brewster School. Both Congressman Tom Davis and Mason District Supervisor Penny Gross spoke.

And we were so proud to have four of the Bailey descendants come and speak. They were deeply moved by the ceremony. Evelyn Bailey said that the dedication of the historic marker "...would have pleased her parents very much." Horace Bailey was impressed by "...the number of people who still cared." Lewis and Maria's great-granddaughter Dodie Bailey Wrenn "...was so proud that she was crying happy tears."<sup>41</sup> Hachaliah would have been proud.



*Figure 9. The dedication of the Bailey's Crossroads historic marker near the corner of Route 7 and Columbia Pike on March 27, 2001. Photograph taken by Jack Lewis Hiller.*



*Figure 10. Recalling the Bailey family's heritage at the marker dedication are (l. to r.) Dodie Bailey Wrenn, Evelyn Bailey and author Naomi Sokol Zeavin. Photograph taken by Jack Lewis Hiller.*



*Figure 11. Sons Mike Bailey (l.) and Sam Bailey (r.) stand with their father Horace in May of 2001 at Sam's annual pig roast held for all of the Baileys still living in the area. Photograph taken by Naomi Sokol Zeavin.*

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank Fairfax County's extraordinary historian Edith Moore Sprouse for encouraging me to tackle this article on the Bailey family. I deeply owe thanks to Stuart Thayer, the noted circus historian, for sending me documentary information on Hachaliah and Lewis. I also would like to acknowledge Florence Oliver for providing information and pictures, and Frank Billingsley for the museum and cemetery tour in Somers, New York. To all of the Bailey family members who helped, thank you: The sisters Evelyn Bailey Wahl and Dodie Bailey Wren who gave me hours of interviews, in addition to lending us their photographs of Moray Mansion and the nine Bailey sons; Horace Bailey for all his time on the telephone and in my home telling me long stories of his youth at the Moray Mansion; Horace's son Sam D. Bailey for papers and for inviting me to the pig roast. Thank you to Reverend Thomas Jackson of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Falls Church, which has a long history with the Bailey family. I am grateful to Jack Lewis Hiller for his time spent taking the great photographs in the Bailey House and at the marker dedication. I appreciate the Fairfax City Regional Library's



Virginia Room's staff (Suzanne Levy, Anita Ramos, and Brian Connelly) for showing me the microfilm, file folders, and books about the Baileys and their neighborhood. The staff at the Fairfax County Circuit Court archives also helped me find maps and other relevant documents. To John Greenhill, a special thank you for driving me up to Somers, New York. And, most importantly, to my four children who lived in the Bailey's Crossroads area and attended Bailey's School—and my five grandchildren who I want to know always how important is our past for that is their future.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Florence Oliver, Town Historian. Personal Communication. Somers, New York. 24 March 2001.
- <sup>2</sup> Charles E. Culver. *History of the Town of Somers*. Somers, New York: Somers Historical Society, 1967, 479.
- <sup>3</sup> Florence Oliver, Town Historian. Personal Communication. Somers, New York. 1 March 2001.
- <sup>4</sup> Clifford L. Snyder. *Somers Remembers*. Somers, New York: Somers Historical Society, 1976, 3.
- <sup>5</sup> Stuart Thayer, Trustee Emeritus, Circus Historical Society, Inc. Personal Communication. Seattle, Washington. 21 March 2000.
- <sup>6</sup> Stuart Thayer, Trustee Emeritus, Circus Historical Society, Inc. Personal Communication. Seattle, Washington. 18 April 2000.
- <sup>7</sup> *Somers, Its People and Places, 1788-1988*. Somers, New York: Somers Historical Society, 1989, 121-123.
- <sup>8</sup> Stuart Thayer, Trustee Emeritus, Circus Historical Society, Inc. Personal Communication. Seattle, Washington. 21 March 2001.
- <sup>9</sup> Snyder, *Somers Remembers*, 7.
- <sup>10</sup> *Somers, Its People and Places*, 121.
- <sup>11</sup> P. T. Barnum. *The Life of Barnum, Written by Himself*. New York: Redfield, 1855.
- <sup>12</sup> *Somers, Its People and Places*, 123 and 126.
- <sup>13</sup> *Alexandria Gazette*, 3 December 1826 and 29 December 1828.
- <sup>14</sup> Fairfax County Deed Book H3:395.
- <sup>15</sup> Stuart Thayer, Circus Historian. Personal correspondence with author. 18 April 2001.
- <sup>16</sup> Melvin Lee Steadman, Jr. *Falls Church by Fence and Fireside*. Falls Church, Virginia: Falls Church Public Library, 1964, 241-242.

- <sup>17</sup> Fairfax County Deed Book H3:192.
- <sup>18</sup> Steadman, 243.
- <sup>19</sup> Steadman, 242 and 245.
- <sup>20</sup> Louise Betts. *History of Bailey's Crossroads*. Vertical File, Bailey's Crossroads, Virginia Room, Fairfax City Regional Library, Fairfax, Virginia. May 1979.
- <sup>21</sup> Evelyn Bailey and Dodie Bailey Wrenn. Personal Interview. 2000.
- <sup>22</sup> Horace Bailey. Personal Interview. 2000.
- <sup>23</sup> Betts.
- <sup>24</sup> Steadman, 242.
- <sup>25</sup> Edwin Bearss, Chief Historian Emeritus, National Park Service. Personal Interview. 2001.
- <sup>26</sup> Southern Claims Commission. Case File 1877-1888. Records of the General Accounting Office, Third Auditors Office, Record Group 217, Claim of Lewis Bailey #1291.
- <sup>27</sup> Fairfax County Deed Book S4:207.
- <sup>28</sup> Steadman, 243.
- <sup>29</sup> Chancery Final File 1899-024 (Part 1 of 3), Francis vs. Bailey, Fairfax County Circuit Court Archives.
- <sup>30</sup> Sam Bailey. Personal Interview. 2001.
- <sup>31</sup> Blanche Syfret McKnight. "Bailey's Grand Review" in *American Motorist (District of Columbia Edition)*, May 1930, 53.
- <sup>32</sup> Steadman, 242.
- <sup>33</sup> Southern Claims Commission. Case File 1877-1888. Records of the General Accounting Office, Third Auditors Office, Record Group 217, Claim of Lewis Bailey #1291.
- <sup>34</sup> Southern Claims Commission. Case File 1877-1888. Records of the General Accounting Office, Third Auditors Office, Claim of Maria Bailey, 27 November 1877.
- <sup>35</sup> Steadman, 242.
- <sup>36</sup> Dodie Bailey Wrenn. Personal Interview. 2000.
- <sup>37</sup> Betts.
- <sup>38</sup> McKnight.
- <sup>39</sup> Fairfax County Deed Books F5:516 and F5:577-578; Fairfax County Deed Book T4:254-256.
- <sup>40</sup> Steadman, 242.
- <sup>41</sup> Kimberli Costabile. "Bailey's Roots: Marker Celebrates Circus Family's History in Fairfax" in *The Annandale Times*, 29 March 2001, 1 and 3.



# **The Home Front: Fairfax County During the Second World War as Reported in the Pages of *The Fairfax Herald***

By  
Barbara A. Welch

*Mrs. Welch, a native of Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania, and former history teacher, has volunteered for 20 years with various Fairfax County entities. She has assisted in many excavations with the county archaeology department. She spent five years indexing The Fairfax Herald newspaper for the years 1937-1973, for which she was presented a Certificate of Appreciation from the Board of Supervisors. This article is a result of reading the Fairfax newspapers documenting the most momentous event of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.*

*The Fairfax Herald* was a weekly newspaper published in Fairfax, Virginia, which cost subscribers \$1.50 a year and was delivered with the mail. The owner and editor was William Lindsay Carne who took over the *Herald* in 1939. The newspaper's eight pages included local news, church and school activities, social announcements, legal notices, marriage license applications, obituaries, births and advertisements. The only state or national news items carried in the *Herald* were those involving Fairfax County or its citizens.

The Second World War as covered by *The Fairfax Herald* is not a record of Allied defeats and victories, global strategy or national economic measures. It is a testimonial to those county citizens who lived here during the war years, the labor they exerted to fight the war on the home front and their efforts to maintain some normalcy for those who could not wear a uniform. The record left behind on the newspaper pages, now on microfilm in the Fairfax City Regional Library, is a proud and noteworthy one.

Before the war, Fairfax County was a rural area of farms and small towns. In 1937, *The Fairfax Herald* reported 2,850 auto tags had been issued in the county,<sup>1</sup> 5,956 students were enrolled in elementary and high schools, teachers were paid an average salary of \$890 a year and only 57 people had

incomes over \$5,000.<sup>2</sup> Farms could still be found in Lincolnia, Merrifield and Tyson's Corner. Citizens traveled in their "machines" over the predominantly unpaved roads to meetings of the Home Demonstration Club, 4-H, P.T.A., Boy Scouts, Chamber of Commerce, Daughters of the Confederacy, Garden Club and the many other civic organizations that were active at this time.

No doubt county citizens read other newspapers and listened to the news on their radios about world events far from their front doors that would soon draw them into a maelstrom. The reality of a possible war would soon be faced by those men who were required to register by the Draft Act of 1940. By October 1940, the local Selective Service Board had a list of 5,533 men ages 21 to 35, who were eligible to be drafted.<sup>3</sup> Some men did not wait to be drafted but enlisted before their numbers were called.

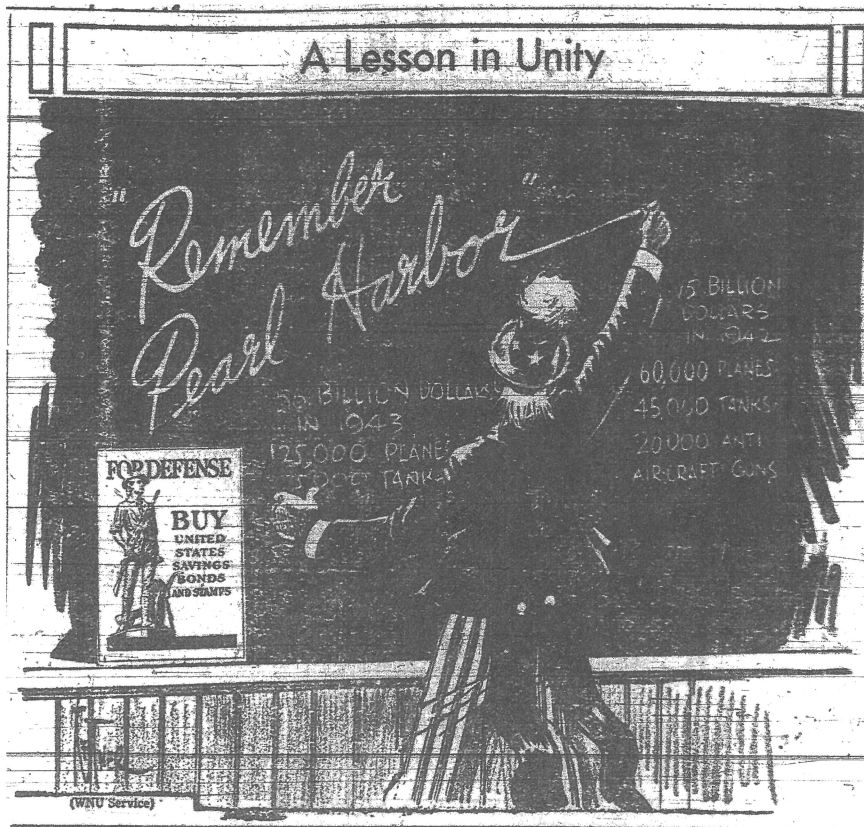


Figure 1. The Herald's March 13, 1942 front page illustration.

Meanwhile, a building boom began in the county that foretold of the increased need for government services, the bulk of which would support the military establishment. Then the fateful day of December 7, 1941, arrived and the county was launched into war on a scale not envisaged by a few old Civil War veterans still telling their tales of combat. *The Fairfax Herald*, distributed on Fridays, did not include any articles concerning Sunday's Pearl Harbor attack in its December 12 issue. Mr. Carne covered the county news as usual, but a few articles mentioned air raid possibilities and rationing. Whether they liked it or not, the war that citizens hoped would never come was now in control of the county's destiny.

During the war years of 1941 through 1945, the citizens of Fairfax County definitely gave their share of "blood, sweat and tears" for the war effort. To this list one would have to add two more items: money and time. Charities,



Figure 2. *The Herald's* June 11, 1943 front page illustration.

churches, social groups, and government bond campaigns solicited for funds at every opportunity. The Community Chest, TB Association and March of Dimes are representative of the many organizations that carried on fund drives staffed by local volunteers.

The War Bond drives held in the county drew the greatest public support, possibly because here was a cause that directly affected those fighting in the war zones. Robert D. Graham directed every War Loan Drive while holding the job as Fairfax mayor and operating an insurance business.<sup>4</sup> Citizens responded faithfully year after year, enabling the county to reach and even surpass their pre-set "quotas". In late 1944, the 6th War Bond drive (drives were usually held twice a year) was launched with a target of \$590,000. When Mr. Graham's committee tallied their pledges, they had collected a whopping \$1,228,000!<sup>5</sup>

In what was perhaps not as popular a cause or less painful than giving money, these same citizens were called upon to give their blood. The Red

Cross began visiting Fairfax and Falls Church in 1942 with its mobile blood unit.

The paper listed these pioneer blood donors and eventually proudly recorded those individuals whose successive donations made them eligible for the Gallon Club. Charter members of this group included Mrs. John Ankers, Mrs. Amy Cantwell, Mrs. Kathleen Linfoot, Mrs. Glenna Patton, Mrs. William Ramey and Marion Earle.<sup>6</sup>

Without a doubt, what citizens were called upon to contribute most during the war was their time. To put the county on a war footing meant covering for all those who had left for military service (and that meant just about every able-bodied male by 1945), fulfilling community responsibilities, staffing war-related campaigns, and all while continuing to earn a living and meet family obligations. County citizens took up these challenges, were quite successful in their endeavors and received little in the way of recognition at war's end.

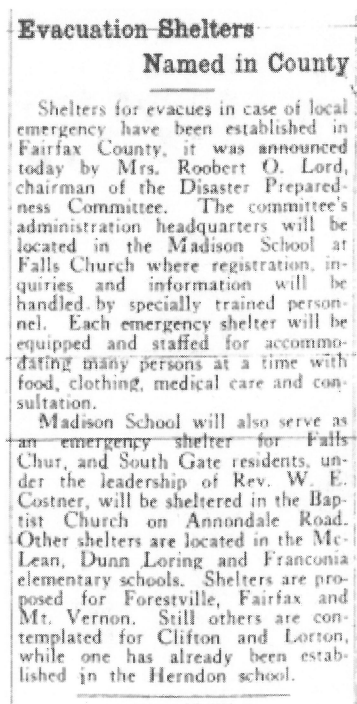


Figure 3. An article on page 1 of the July 10, 1942 Herald.

One new group they were asked to support was the Civilian Defense Office. Robert B. Walker, a member of the Fairfax Town Council, was appointed coordinator of this group.<sup>7</sup> Before he resigned in 1943 to enter military service, Mr. Walker had enlisted the aid of 2,089 citizens to help with Civilian Defense work.<sup>8</sup> He was succeeded by R. M. Loughborough and Captain Joseph C. Bennett. The Civilian Defense Office oversaw air raid shelters and emergency medical posts, held blackout drills, trained air raid wardens and airplane spotters, and initiated the many scrap and salvage drives. Old iron products, newspapers, tin cans and any aluminum that could be spared were collected at fire stations with the help of school and civic groups (such as the Boy Scouts and Rotary clubs) and transported to regional collection centers. To this list was later added rubber, kitchen grease and fat for the making of explosives, and feathers for aviator jacket insulation. Besides these items, citizens were canvassed for books, magazines, phonograph records, sports equipment, radios, furniture to outfit day rooms and flowers and plants for the sick and injured. These donations were destined for the many local military camps and hospitals, including Fort Belvoir and Walter Reed.

The patriotic men who enlisted after Pearl Harbor were given a rousing send-off party before departing for training camps. Later draftees departed without fanfare but were missed just as much by their families and friends. Many families would see off two, three or even four sons before war's end. The Buckley, Anderson, Kielsgard, Baughman and Cross families had three sons serving in various services and at least one family, that of Mrs. James M. Fox, made the local news column with four sons wearing military uniforms.<sup>9</sup>

Men who were too old to be drafted or enlist, but who had served during the Great War or remembered tales from Confederate veterans, still wanted to do their part. They were given the opportunity to join the Civilian Protection Corps organized in Fairfax City, Herndon and Falls Church in December of 1941.<sup>10</sup> In September 1942, another home guard unit was organized called the Fairfax Minute Men.<sup>11</sup> Under the leadership of G. Wallace Carper and William C. Pruitt, the men, armed only with hunting rifles and shotguns, drilled at local schools and held maneuvers along Bull Run.

A Women's Land Army was formed in 1943 for the purpose of assisting farmers in this still largely rural county. It was led by Mrs. C. C. Seane.<sup>12</sup> No record is left in the newspaper of how many women joined this group and the extent of their aid to farmers.

A better record can be found of the Red Cross' activities in the county during the war. Before the war Mrs. Lucy Madeira Wing oversaw a small



group of Red Cross members. Their work covered disaster preparedness and response, first aid courses and civilian aid to warring countries in remote locations. When war was declared against the Axis powers, membership in the local Red Cross increased dramatically with small groups organized in every town and at rural crossroads. Women met several times a week in homes, churches or community buildings to roll bandages, knit socks and assemble kit bags. The Red Cross presence in the county, with its headquarters in Falls Church, included the Blood Donor Service, Canteen Corps, Motor Corps, Production Corps, Home Service Volunteer Corps, Nurses' Aid Corps, Gray Ladies and Staff Assistance Corps. Mrs. Wing remained as chapter chairman with day-to-day operations directed by a tireless staff that included Mrs. Douglas Murray, Mrs. Philip Talbott, Mrs. Stanley Stewart, Mrs. Edward F. Howery, Mrs. Edmund Parry, Mrs. Hannah Howze, Mrs. Charles Pozer, Mrs. Lomax Tayloe, Mrs. Pauling Ford, Mrs. F. B. Northrup and Mrs. Robert Landreth.

To appreciate the generous response from citizens who were solicited to give something at every opportunity—whether it was money, blood, pots, grease, or time—we must remember they were asked to do this while they were being required to use less gasoline and tires. After a hard day on the volunteer front, these tireless workers had to come home and open up a refrigerator that did not contain many of the ingredients they usually used for putting together their favorite meals. For most people, this was another sacrifice necessary to support those fighting to bring peace to the world again. They often went without butter, sugar, coffee, warm houses, nylon stockings, new shoes or tires, and they did this without complaining. Pleasure driving was not permitted so families curtailed visits to family and friends, the Sunday drives to Washington, vacations at the beach and Saturday night dates. Church gatherings and school functions were held less frequently or postponed entirely. Even official gatherings that would place burdens on the gasoline supply were canceled. The committee organizing the county's Bicentennial Anniversary in 1942 resorted to canceling their plans for what should have been a joyous celebration.<sup>13</sup>

The County Rationing Board was organized in January 1942. Under the leadership of B. E. Trenis, the board's role was to manage and regulate civilian shortages.<sup>14</sup> Its secretary, Mrs. Mollie Cleveland, directed office work and organized registration for ration books. In March 1942, sugar became the first item to be rationed, followed by gasoline in May. Other items quickly joined the list, including tires and inner tubes. With car parts almost impossible to replace, some county citizens resorted to using their reliable horses and wagons to travel short distances. Other workers used

## "For the Duration"

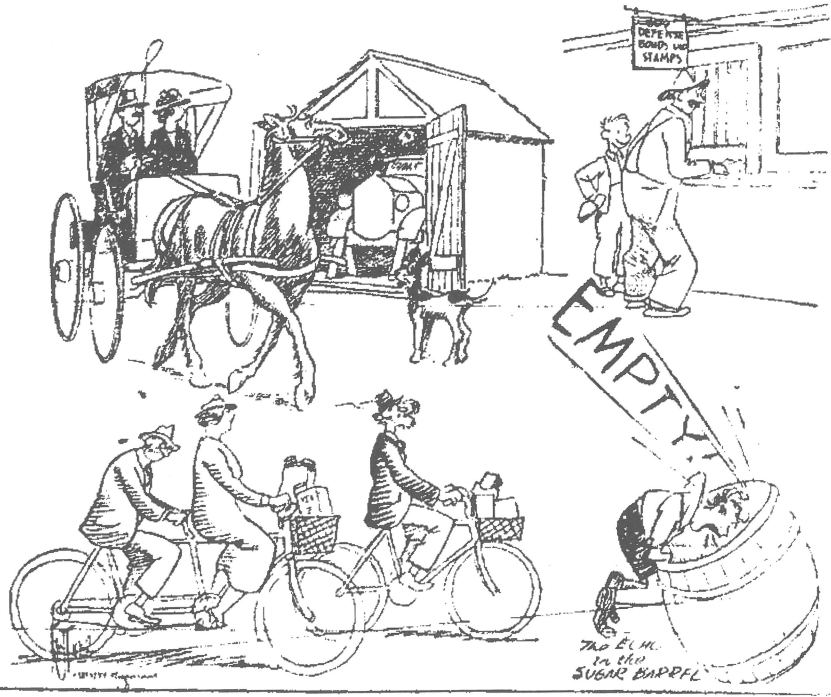


Figure 4. The Herald's May 15, 1942 front page illustration.

public transportation or organized car pools to get to jobs in Washington, D.C., or at the newly built Pentagon. By 1943 the list of rationed items included most foods, clothing, shoes, fuel oil, bicycles, typewriters, rubber boots and stoves. Books containing the various stamps and coupons needed to purchase the rationed goods were distributed by the board and its volunteer staff. But the work of distributing over 50,000 ration books and enforcing the many regulations overwhelmed this small volunteer "army" and by May 1943, a paid staff of ten manned the office in Fairfax.

For people who owned or lived on a farm in Fairfax County during the war, rationing of food items did not make quite the same impact on their diets as for those who resided in town, but rationing did affect farm life in a different and more critical manner. Farmers had to face similar shortages of tires and gasoline but for them the lack of such items might mean the inability to make a living. Without tires or fuel, tractors could not be used to prepare fields or trucks could not carry produce to market. While farmers

did receive more gasoline than townsfolk, their work was hindered by shortages of barbed wire, fertilizer, harvesting equipment and farm machinery replacement parts. With sons and other male relatives serving in the military and many of their daughters employed in war-related jobs elsewhere, dairymen and farmers searched, fruitlessly in most cases, for hired help to assist them. The available manpower was confronted with many employment choices and quite logically chose jobs that paid more than farm work.<sup>15</sup> By the summer of 1944 some convict labor was being utilized by local farmers. In June 1945 the county was able to secure the use of 150 German prisoners-of-war who were housed in a camp on Lee Highway. By November the POWs were gone and many local men had returned after being discharged. But for some farmers it was too late. Faced with poor growing seasons, lack of labor and war-related shortages, many county farmers and dairymen could just not continue on and sold off their stock and land.

Patriotic appeals were made to citizens by county officials and public utilities to back the war effort by limiting telephone and electricity use, curtailing unnecessary construction that would require wire or lumber, sharing rides to work, staying on daylight saving time year round and just learning new ways of doing without their favorite things. The county agricultural agents, Joseph E. Beard (who departed in January 1942 for military service) and Lawrence Greene, assisted farmers with their problems and shortages. They encouraged 4-H Club members to plant Victory Gardens and raise chickens or pigs. Lucy Blake, Fairfax County Home Demonstration agent, showed women how to recycle used clothing, can and preserve home-grown fruits and vegetables, and suggested recipes using foods more readily available. For all her good intentions, victory ice cream, baked bean loaf, breaded brains, pigeon pie, parsnip patties or sugarless cakes never really became family favorites.

#### Victory Ice Cream

¼ lb. marshmallows

1 cup milk

1 cup cream

1 teaspoon vanilla

Heat the milk and melt the marshmallows in it. Cool. Add vanilla. Whip cream and mix well with marshmallow mixture. Freeze.<sup>16</sup>

#### Baked Bean Loaf

For a change sometime, bake a bean loaf as you would a meat loaf. Start with 3 cups of cooked beans. Chop the beans very fine, or mash them with a potato masher. Add a chopped onion, ½ cup of milk, water, or liquid

from the beans, a beaten egg and a cup of bread crumbs. A little finely chopped celery is good, too. Season to taste with salt and pepper and some dried herbs if you like. Mix well and shape into a loaf. Place in a shallow pan, pour a little melted fat over the top and bake until well browned. Serve with hot tomato sauce.<sup>17</sup>

### Breaded Brains

(recipe by Miss Amanda Blake)

Wash brains, soak in cold water (with or without salt) for half an hour, then remove blood vessels and membrane. Whatever way the brains are to be served, they are easier to handle if precooked. To do this, cover the brains with slightly salted cold water and simmer for about 15 minutes. Cool in the broth. Drain the cooked and cooled brains and separate into fairly large pieces. Dip them in a beaten egg, diluted with 1 tablespoon of water, sprinkle with salt and pepper, then roll in finely sifted bread crumbs, fry slowly in fat. Serve hot. Tomato sauce is good with breaded brains.<sup>18</sup>

The children in Fairfax County were also called upon to aid the war effort on the home front. They assisted in the scrap and salvage drives held throughout the county. Students participated in school defense stamp and bond drives where classes and schools competed for the honor of purchasing a jeep or ambulance. At every high school, students had the opportunity to join a Victory Corps whose goals included preparation for future military service or civilian defense work. By March 1943, a total of 1,850 students (school enrollment in the county that year was approximately 7,000) joined the Corps whose motto was "Save, Serve, and Conserve."<sup>19</sup> A Fairfax High School shop class constructed model aircraft to be used in civilian defense and military training programs.<sup>20</sup> Discovering the fact that the Navy would take enlistees at age 17 with their parents' permission, many patriotic high school boys did not wait for graduation and enlisted as soon as they were eligible. (By late 1942 the draft age had been lowered to 18 so they would not have to wait long if their parents refused permission.) Students in elementary schools were almost as involved as the older bobby-soxers were. Amidst a constant turnover of teachers and classmates, young students found their usual school routines changed by holding air raid drills, constructing maps with the appropriate war fronts marked and walking to school due to the tire, gasoline and bus driver shortages.

Fairfax County's population jumped from 40,929 in 1940 to 54,531 by 1942.<sup>21</sup> Most of this increase was the result of the expanded military presence in the area that included Fort Belvoir and the Pentagon. What we cannot learn from reading the newspapers of this time is what the U.S.

## Fairfax H. S. Students Make Model Airplanes

Vocational shop teachers of Fairfax County are cooperating with the United States Navy in its aircraft model production program. It is being handled at Fairfax High School by Llewellyn Wilson and Walter J. Dowling; at Herndon, by Marcel Pfalzgraf, and at Mt. Vernon by Robert Marshall.

Through the U. S. Office of Education in the Federal Security Administration, 26,000 American youth in high schools throughout the country are being asked to build these model planes for the United States Navy. The Bureau of Aeronautics is preparing plans and specifications for the model planes and is furnishing them to the U. S. Office of Education which administers the program with the co-operation of State Departments of Education. Virginia's quota is 8,000 planes.

These models are urgently needed for training Navy personnel in aircraft recognition and range estimation in gunnery practice. They likewise will be important in the training of civilians in aircraft recognition, an essential element in civilian defense.

To students completing stated quantities of models which pass inspection, the Bureau of Aeronautics and the Office of Education will present certificates in recognition of the importance of the work.

Figure 5. An article on the front page of the March 13, 1942 Herald.

armed military forces were actually doing here, the numbers of personnel stationed at the local bases and what new facilities were being built. The Pentagon was an exception to this due to its size and the number of local citizens engaged in its construction. For this lack of information we can thank the military censoring system whose unofficial rallying cry was “Loose lips sink ships.”

The comings and goings of local citizens now in the military usually could not be included in the hometown news as embarkation leave could be valuable information to the enemy. Some military news not officially released made it into the *Herald* when it occurred nearby and involved fatalities. Two incidents that made headlines included the six soldiers killed by lighting on Fort Belvoir’s parade ground in August 1943<sup>22</sup> and the three soldiers killed and eleven injured when the Ox Road bridge over the Southern Railroad tracks near Fairfax Station collapsed on June 4, 1944.<sup>23</sup>

However secret the military tried to keep their plans, news leaked out in various ways. In late April 1944, *The Fairfax Herald* mentioned the organization of a committee to plan a celebration when the invasion of the European mainland occurred. The committee was co-chaired by R. M. Loughborough (county purchasing agent during the war), Rev. H. C. Lukens, and Rev. Harry Balthis.<sup>24</sup> Thus Fairfax County was ready on Tuesday June 6 when news was officially released of the D-Day invasion in Normandy. As the committee had planned, church bells began ringing at 11 a.m. and prayer services were held in local churches. At least two county citizens, Maurice Williams and Henry B. Pearson, were killed that day and are included on the brass memorial in front of the Fairfax Courthouse:

#### FAIRFAX COUNTY WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL

(located on the lawn in front of the old Fairfax County Courthouse)

Flavious Broaddus Alder	Richard B. Carmichael	Claude S. Deavers
Richard R. Arnold	Stanley L. Carts	John T. DeBell Jr.
James V. Barron	David C. Cather	Joe DeGanahl
Harry L. Baughman	Willis U. Chinn	Gladstone W. Donovan
Leland E. Belgard	Melvin S. Cobb	Eugene G. Farr
Edward A. Belknap	Robert E. Cockerill	Robert A. Feltner
Charles E. Besley	Richard L. Coffeen	John W. Ferguson Jr.
James H. Brett Jr.	John O. R. Coll	Ralph P. Ford
Thomas W. Bridges	Raymond L. Cooper	Williams S. Fought
Corbin B. Bryan III	Thomas J. Cunningham	Paul H. Fraley
Daniel C. Budd	Garland W. Davidson	George W. Frame
Alex E. Campbell	Leonard R. Davis	Roy L. Gilbert

Robert J. Girard	Lindon R. Marshall	Charles D. Reeve
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James G. LaMarre	William A. Otis	Lawrence T. Turner
John R. Lane	Harlie Pace	Victor T. Turrou
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Norman E. Leppert	John E. Peabody	Robert M. Warren
Charles E. Lewis	Henry B. Pearson	John W. Watkins
Joseph K. Linkins Jr.	Philip E. Pergande	Egbert T. Watt Jr.
Ralph T. Lynn	Foster Perzel	Orland I. Webley
William M. McCarthy	Ross R. Poole	James V. Whitmer
Alfred B. McClure	William C. Powers	Maurice M. Williams
Joseph W. Madden Jr.	Russell A. Quick	Randolph M. Wood

The surge of building permits listed in the paper hinted of the enlarged military presence around the county although many of these permits were for tourist cabins or chicken houses. The growth in population and scarcity of goods brought an increase in crime. More rapes, thefts and robberies were reported than in peacetime. Common thieves targeted gasoline in car tanks, while anti-freeze, inner tubes and used tires became hot commodities. In March 1942, one very impious thief stole a tire from the car of Rev. John F. Kociela of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Fairfax Station and returned in a few weeks to steal another tire from the same vehicle.<sup>25</sup> The most audacious theft occurred in January 1943 when the Rationing Board's office in Fairfax was robbed of gasoline coupon books. County officials were also kept busy processing a record number of marriage licenses. Not surprisingly for the disruptive times, county lawyers filed more divorce suits than in prewar years.

With the darkest days of the war possibly behind them, the busy workers on the home front stepped up their efforts, encouraged in part by the frantic activities occurring at the local military bases. Optimism increased when the Rationing Board eased some regulations and even removed a few foods (lard, canned milk, corn and pineapple juice) from their list. The Civil

Defense Force held blackout and air raid drills less frequently and the airplane spotter tower in Vienna was deactivated. By the fall of 1944, announcements for horse shows, ice cream socials, fire department carnivals, P.T.A. meetings and church oyster suppers returned to the newspaper columns.

Plans for peacetime life were formulated, although prematurely it turns out, when the Citizens' Post-War Reemployment Committee was organized in October 1944. Colonel W. E. Leonard served as chairman of this committee.<sup>26</sup> Maybe victory was in sight, but meanwhile the list of casualties lengthened. The blue star service flags hung in home windows were replaced with gold star ones signifying the loss of life by a family member in the military:

### GOLD STAR ROSTER

The following list is of those mothers (and a few fathers) of Fairfax County who lost a son during World War II. It was published in *The Fairfax Herald* on November 15, 1945:

Mrs. Myrtle Allder	Mrs. Essie Girard	Mrs. William Neish
Mrs. Mary F. Arnold	Mrs. Tracey Hawley	Mrs. Marshall Norford
Mrs. Mary E. Barron	P. J. Heath	Mrs. Darrell W. Otis
Mrs. Elsie I. Belgard	Mrs. Mary A. Hutchison	Mrs. Ruth Patterson
Mrs. Blanche A. Belknap	Mrs. Elizabeth Hutchison	Major John B. Paul
Mrs. J. L. Besley	Mrs. Rose C. Kanmermier	Mrs. Anna V. Pearson
Mrs. Gertrude Bridges	Mrs. Ethel R. LaMarre	Mrs. Gilbert Pergande
Mrs. Corin B. Bryan	Mrs. Grace F. Lane	Mrs. Effie Poole
Mrs. Efa L. Coffeen	Mrs. Anna Leppert	Mrs. William Powers
Mrs. Nellie Davidson	Mrs. D. D. Lewis	Mrs. Henry Rinke
Mrs. John T. DeBell	Mrs. Joseph K. Linkins	Mrs. Mary I. Stalcup
Mrs. Nell V. Donovan	Mrs. Laura McClure	Mrs. Stephen C. Stuntz
Mrs. Martha C. Dove	Mrs. Mary Marshall	Mrs. Emma Sutphin
Mrs. Fannie L. Farr	John H. Martin	Mrs. Sylvia S. Turrou
Walter A. Ford	Mrs. J. O. Martin	Mrs. Laura V. Warren
Mrs. Jennings B. Fraley	Mrs. Rosie L. Mills	Mrs. Alice Watkins
Mrs. Lucille M. Frame		Mrs. Grace E. Watts
Mrs. Eleanor V. Gilbert		Mrs. Sarah E. Webley

Fairfax County citizens were fighting in places difficult to find on some old maps. Corregidor, Anzio, Tarawa, Monte Cassino, St. Lo and Iwo Jima became household words before the war ended.

When the German surrender was announced on May 8, 1945, the county took the news in stride. No loud or wild celebrations occurred, although



some churches thoughtfully held services. For most citizens it was a day of business as usual. But when radios announced the surrender of Japan on Tuesday evening, August 14, air raid sirens were sounded and fire trucks paraded through towns. The official holiday and celebration began the following day. County offices and most businesses closed for the day. Local churches again scheduled special services to offer prayers for all those who gave their lives to restore peace to the world.

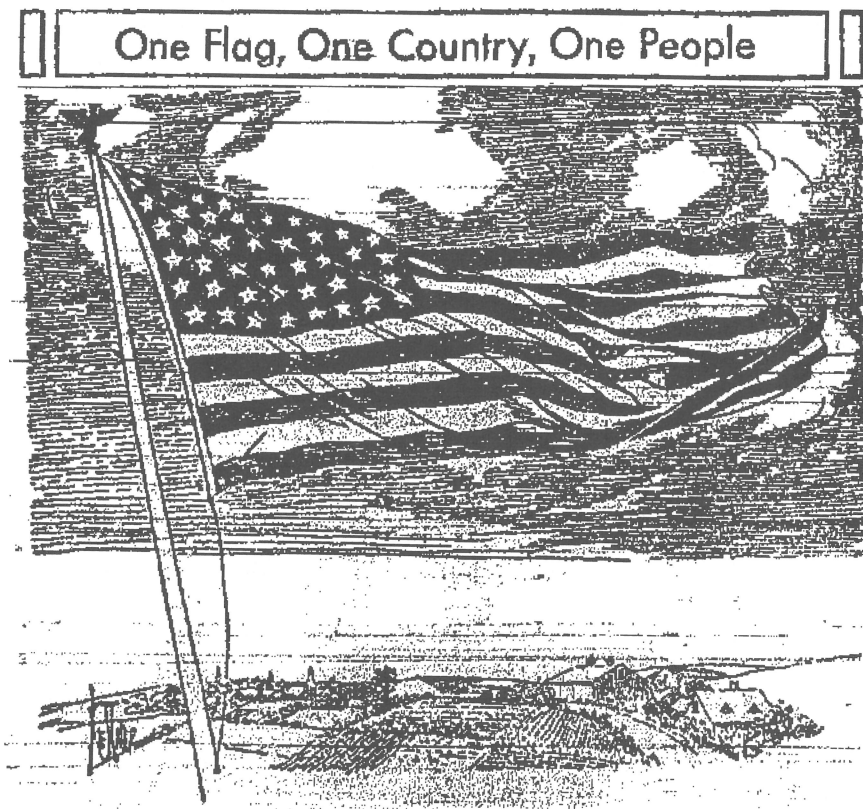


Figure 6. *The Herald's June 9, 1944 front page illustration.*

The war was over and the good citizens of Fairfax County could congratulate themselves on a job well done. They had faced hardships and deprivations and were called upon to accomplish tasks never imagined before the war. Finally, their sons, brothers, fathers, sisters and daughters would return home and everybody could get on with their pre-war lives. But most residents, veteran or not, did not anticipate then that they would

never return to life as they knew it before the war. The growth and development begun during those war years would change the county's destiny forever.

## Acknowledgements

In February 1994, I was recruited to assist with *The Fairfax Herald* indexing project already begun by Malcolm Richardson. From the very first, I was fascinated with reading about the events and people who made it into the Fairfax newspaper every week. My few months stretched to five years and I accumulated 467,991 records in my database by project's end. I am grateful to the Fairfax City Regional Library, especially the wonderful staff of the Virginia Room, for their assistance and encouragement. I also want to thank my patient husband and sons who provided technical support and listened to the countless stories of what I read in those old newspapers.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> *The Fairfax Herald (TFH)*, April 9, 1937:1.
- <sup>2</sup> *TFH*, September 10, 1937:1.
- <sup>3</sup> *TFH*, October 18, 1940:1.
- <sup>4</sup> *TFH*, June 11, 1943:1.
- <sup>5</sup> *TFH*, January 12, 1945:1.
- <sup>6</sup> *TFH*, July 27, 1945:1.
- <sup>7</sup> *TFH*, July 24, 1942:1.
- <sup>8</sup> *TFH*, July 31, 1942:1.
- <sup>9</sup> *TFH*, February 2, 1945:1.
- <sup>10</sup> *TFH*, September 19, 1941:6.
- <sup>11</sup> *TFH*, November 6, 1942:1.
- <sup>12</sup> *TFH*, May 21, 1943:1.
- <sup>13</sup> *TFH*, February 27, 1942:1 and May 22, 1942:1.
- <sup>14</sup> *TFH*, January 9, 1942:1 and May 15, 1942:1.
- <sup>15</sup> *TFH*, May 25, 1945:1.
- <sup>16</sup> *TFH*, July 3, 1942:1.
- <sup>17</sup> *TFH*, January 29, 1943:1.
- <sup>18</sup> *TFH*, January 22, 1943:5.
- <sup>19</sup> *TFH*, September 17, 1943:1.
- <sup>20</sup> *TFH*, March 13, 1942:1.
- <sup>21</sup> *TFH*, July 31, 1942:1.
- <sup>22</sup> *TFH*, August 13, 1943:1.

<sup>23</sup> *TFH*, June 9, 1944:1.

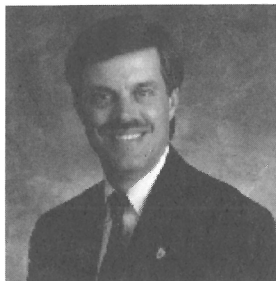
<sup>24</sup> *TFH*, April 28, 1944:4.

<sup>25</sup> *TFH*, March 13, 1942:1.

<sup>26</sup> *TFH*, October 27, 1944:1.

Note: *The Fairfax Herald* newspaper index provides the opportunity for county citizens and their descendants to access their family's activities during the Second World War. The index is available online through the Fairfax County Public Library. Copies of *The Fairfax Herald* newspaper articles can be obtained from the Virginia Room of the Fairfax City Regional Library (see website for cost and mailing address).

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Volume 27	\$15.00
Volume 28	\$15.00

\*Sets do not include all of the earlier volumes.